

TONI HUATA



AOTEAROA — NEW ZEALAND

WWW.TONIHUATA.COM



Reviews:

"An asset and ambassador of Māori Language. Toni has picked up where her grandfather left off and taken Māori music into a new realm"

Former Te Taurawhiri i te reo Māori CEO, NZ - Haami Piripi

"Toni is a dynamic, high achiever who produces high quality work in the performing arts and broadcasting industry"

Former Te Māngai Pāho CEO, NZ - Trevor Moeke

"A convoluted and complex attack on vocal harmonies with sweet lyrics...Toni Huata breathes family history, land loves, language, identity, heart loves"

- Review of album 'Te Māori e' - New Zealand Musician

"A unique sound that is further enhanced by the organic sounds of poi, birdsong and body percussion while above it all floats Huata's stunning vocals"

- Review of album 'Mauri Tō – Everlasting Force' - New Zealand Musician

'Hopukia' is an incredibly stylistically varied album that manages to hold together as a cohesive flow thanks to Toni's huge talents as a vocalist. She's an exceptional singer who can deliver an amazing performance across a unique range of styles ... from sweet R'n'B to opera to haka, I don't know of any other vocalist who can perform so convincingly in such different genres."

- Review of album 'HOPUKIA' – Gisborne Herald, NZ

"Huata has outdone herself...This is a great album for all Kiwi's, it is distinct in nature and Toni Huata and her team should be proud of mixing it up to suit a wider and younger range of audience"

- Waiata Māori Music Magazine

TONI HUATA



From London jazz clubs to European arts festivals to New Zealand's Te Papa Tongarewa, Toni Huata's style and strength as a performer allows her to stand confidently in te Ao Māori (the world of Māori) and non-Māori worlds.

"The beautiful vocal power of Toni Huata" - Dompst, NZ

"Aotearoa's very own Whitney Houston" - Cook Island New, NZ

"Constantly in demand, audiences are captivated as Toni adds to the allurement of our exotic shores making Māori language 'sexy'" - Tu Mai, NZ

Toni is a Māori songstress whose talent and music reflects her deep spiritual and cultural roots. Toni's voice ranges from Jazz, Soul, Opera to Haka and allows her to stand in various music and dance festivals around the world including support to The Neville Brothers (USA). Toni constantly performs live with common appearances at festivals, fashion shows, theatres, corporate events, health & education forums, Awards shows and women's prisons.

Internationally Toni has performed throughout United Kingdom, Europe, Canada, USA, Pacific, Australia and Asia. Her highlights have been the first Māori act to Headline at the world-renowned Jazz club – Ronnie Scott's in London. ***"Māori Diva sings in London" - NZ New, UK***

"Brave and true like her ancestors Huata - Seizes the day!" – Capital Times, NZ

Hailing from Hastings in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, Toni says she was surrounded by an eclectic array of influences including the Anglican Church, choir, tap dancing, musical theatre and Kapahaka (Māori cultural performance). She affiliates to Ngāti Kahungunu and Rongowhakaata tribes, and is also of Lebanese, German, Scandinavian and Irish decent.

"Toni brings forth sounds and feelings from the past, mixes it with today's international musical influences to present a sound for the future" - Tu Mai, NZ.



Toni graduated in music at Whitireia Polytechnic, Porirua and her quest to hone skills as a performer took her to Jim Moriarty's touring theatre company where she held roles as an actor, singer, workshop facilitator, sound technician and tour manager. Toni also delivers unique Māori culture, language and movement workshops to many institutions including the NZ School of Dance and Drama. Adding more strings to her bow, Toni holds a trade certificate in hairdressing and third degree in Reiki Mastership.

Toni's voice featured in Gareth Farr's Fan Fare Music for ALL 48 games in the Rugby World Cup 2011 and Toni performs for many theatrical productions, TV and film including voice work for Peter Jackson's King Kong.

Presently, Toni performs nationally with her new release Tomokia and is working on further musical and theatrical collaborations. Soon Toni returns overseas to perform at the Shanghai World Music Festival and tour to neighboring cities in China. After this, Toni will attend AWME in Melbourne, Australia and collaborate in Moana Dreaming. Waahuu will attend Womex in Spain exploring further world territories and tour circuits for Toni and her music.



Maori music for the world



Her place in the world: Toni Huata will this year take her latest album *Tomokia* to the Shanghai World Music Festival and the Australian World Music Expo in Melbourne.

Photo: Kate Whitley

MUSIC

MIKE
ALEXANDER

mike.alexander@fairfaxmedia.co.nz



TONI Huata is on a mission to be at the forefront of making Maori music global.

The Wellington-based singer simultaneously released her latest album *Tomokia* last month along with albums by Te Manu and The Wagner Brothers, which she produced.

"The New Zealand and Maori music industry is unique and, in many ways, still very young in the world in terms of what signature sound comes from our country because we know that it is vast," Huata says. "My constant goals within the area I work in is to produce quality Maori music, quality performance with quality marketing and publicity so that our stories can be heard and

shared to the nation and beyond.

"We are part of a long journey that was started by many before us, we contribute to it today and I look forward to the developments tomorrow.

"Later this year I look forward to performing at the Shanghai World Music Festival and then return to Australian World Music Expo in Melbourne.

"Bringing it back home though, my biggest role has to be mum and balancing all these experiences and hard work with my family life. It wouldn't happen if I wasn't well supported so I'm thankful always for that.

"Continuing doing something that I love while keeping connected and involved with the community, my iwi, my whānau and living my life with purpose and happiness.

"We all want to make a difference and capture opportunities when they come but I also hope to leave a legacy for my children, family and descendants as my ancestors have done for me."

WIN WIN WIN

Sunday News has a signed copy of Toni Huata's *Tomokia* to give away. Email etc@sunday-news.co.nz with Huata in the subject line by July 9.

The recording of the bilingual *Tomokia*, which was produced by Pitch Black's Paddy Free, was tinged with sadness when Huata's father died on August 8 last year.

"That played a big part in the album where I composed three songs in his memory at that time. This still fell into the overall kaupapa [theme] for *Tomokias*.

"We had a good relationship but I didn't know Jeff growing up. I was brought up with my grandparents on my mum's side but we met in my 20s, not long after my engagement. Jeff became a very active, good father when our relationship blossomed. He was a determined person, charismatic with a bit of cheek but definitely a man of integrity."



TONI HUATA: Tomokia

By Huia Hamon

With her stunning stage presence, powerful voice and performance, Toni Huata has paved the way for a number of Māori speaking singer/songwriters. This is her fifth album release, which is no small feat for an independent and hard working wahine. For Huata, 'Tomokia' represents accomplishment, completion and bravery with the concept originating from an ancestral proverb: 'E rere e te huata hopukia, e rere e te manuka tomokia'. In this album, there are waves of different styles from dance, to reggae to more downbeat, electronic styles. It is similar to her last release 'Hopukia', which was also written with the charismatic Paddy Free, a sculptor and creator of epic sound-scapes. With driving tribal beats on songs such as *Tomokia* and the distinct vibration/sound-wave style of Free, each song here is vibrant. The use of taonga puoro and te reo Māori is effortless. Supporting Huata's clear strong voice and Free's raw beats, 'Tomokia' has been beautifully mastered at Kog Studio by Chris Chetland to give it that extra sheen.

http://www.nzmusician.co.nz/index.php/ps_pagename/album/pi_albumid/2323

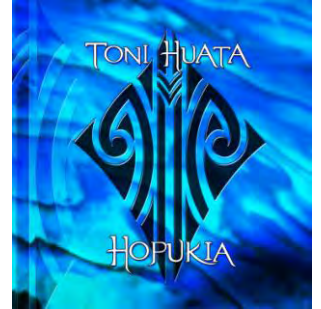


DISCOGRAPHY



TOMOKIA (2014) Dance, Pop, Reggae & Soul. NZ Music Chart Topper & FINALIST FOR BEST MAORI POP ALBUM 2014, 'Tomokia' is Toni Huata's fifth album and her second in the dub and electronica genre, made in collaboration with celebrated Piha musician and producer Paddy Free of Pitch Black fame. According to Paddy, Toni Huata has always been adventurous in exploring new styles and genres of music - "which is testament to her huge vocal skills in soul, R'n'B, pop, haka ... you name it, she can probably sing it!" On the new album, she branches out into everything from dance-pop and moody, deep dub tracks through to ambient 'tone poems', strum-along ballads and feel-good reggae. If the last album was a new direction, then this one furthers that exploration along many diverse paths." 'Tomokia' represents accomplishment, completion and bravery with the concept originating from an ancestral proverb: 'E rere e te huata hopukia, e rere e te manuka tomokia'. **ODE Records –**

HOPUKIA (2012) - Dub, Dance and Electronica, Toni Huata's new album Hopukia is a NZ Music and Indie Chart success that includes a first time collaboration with NZ's most respected electronic musician Paddy Free and an encore collaboration with acclaimed composer and percussionist Gareth Farr. Hopukia won **BEST MĀORI POP ALBUM in 2013**. *"Huata has outdone herself...mixing it up for a wider and younger audience"* – *Waiata Māori Music Magazine, NZ*. *"I don't know of any other vocalist who can perform so convincingly in such different genres."* – *Review of 'HOPUKIA' by Gisbourne Herald, NZ*



Whiti - Shine (2010) – Nominated for 5 Maori Music Awards this beautifully crafted album is Toni's third release. Her production team reads like a dream of music gods - Maaka McGregor, Gareth Farr and Charles Royal. It is no surprise that Huata's attention to detail and quality has always been evident in her work and keeps her at the top. – *Tu Mai, NZ*. **Whiti** takes you on a blissful journey through haka, dance, roots, urban pop, soul, dub to classical ballads. With *Whiti* being a celebration of life, meaning to shine and be transported the music of Whiti have given many joy! **Salient & Spasifik, NZ**.

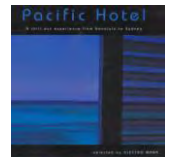
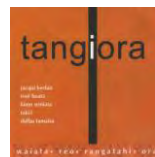
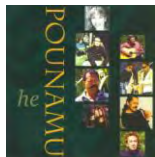
Mauri To – Everlasting Force (2003) is an album that evolved from Toni Huata's desire to develop songs written by her late grandfather Te Okanga Huata. Huata has fashioned an album that embraces modern dance beats as well as Middle Eastern and Latin influences. Conventional Maori & Pacific Island instrumentation sits easily alongside digital technology further enhanced by the organic sounds of poi, birdsong and body percussion while above it all floats Huata's stunning vocals. Proud celebrations of Pacific connection as well as a positive focus on family, friendship and relationship with the land. This combined with enhanced CD features like music videos and photo gallery makes **Mauri To** a class package. **NZ Musician Magazine by Tony Parker**



Te Māori e (2001 - debut album)

Co-Produced by Toni and Flax Wax studios, *Te Māori e* is a 16 track album of compositions, a smooth mix of jazz, dub, jungle, flamenco, classical, poi and traditional. *Te Māori e* features the cream of New Zealand musicians and was launched as a theatrical show to critical acclaim. A tribute to strength and positive Māori spirit. *"Her stunning voice has been heard before but 'Te Māori e' is visual and delight"* – *Real Groove, NZ*

Toni also features on: **NZ -Tohu Whakawhiti, Tangiora, Wahine Rezent, He Karanga, He Tohu Mauriora, He Pounamu AND Tino Reka (UK), Loop and Pacific Hotel Vol 1 & 2. (France/Europe)**



TOMOKIA

TONI HUATA

www.tonihuata.com



Mā te Reo, Mā te Reo, Mā te Reo



T O M O K I A LAUNCH & TOUR, NZ



World Indigenous Conferences, NZ

"Her classical vocals" – City Voice, NZ



International Rugby Test with Strike Percussion, NZ

NGĀ TUKE MATA O MATARIKI

A Celebration of New Māori Music & Performing Arts from Ngāti Kahungunu

Thursday 5 June 2014 @ 5.30 pm - 9.30 pm
Mākarō Room, Te Raukura: Wharewaka Function Centre
Odlins Square, 15 Jervois Quay, Wellington Waterfront

NEW SOUNDS

'Tomokia' - Toni Huata supported by Paddy Free
'Te Manu' - PAO: Karl, Te Manea & Tangaroa Teariki
'The Wagner Brothers' - Adrian & Marc Wagner

GUEST PERFORMERS ...

Te Kura o Ōtari - Ōtari School, Wilton, Wellington
Kahungunu-a-Tara - Seniors Kapa Haka
with Te Taite Cooper

RSVPs ESSENTIAL ...

Entry by koha (donation)
Phone: +64 21 639 790
Email: waahuu@xtra.co.nz
Website: www.tonihuata.com

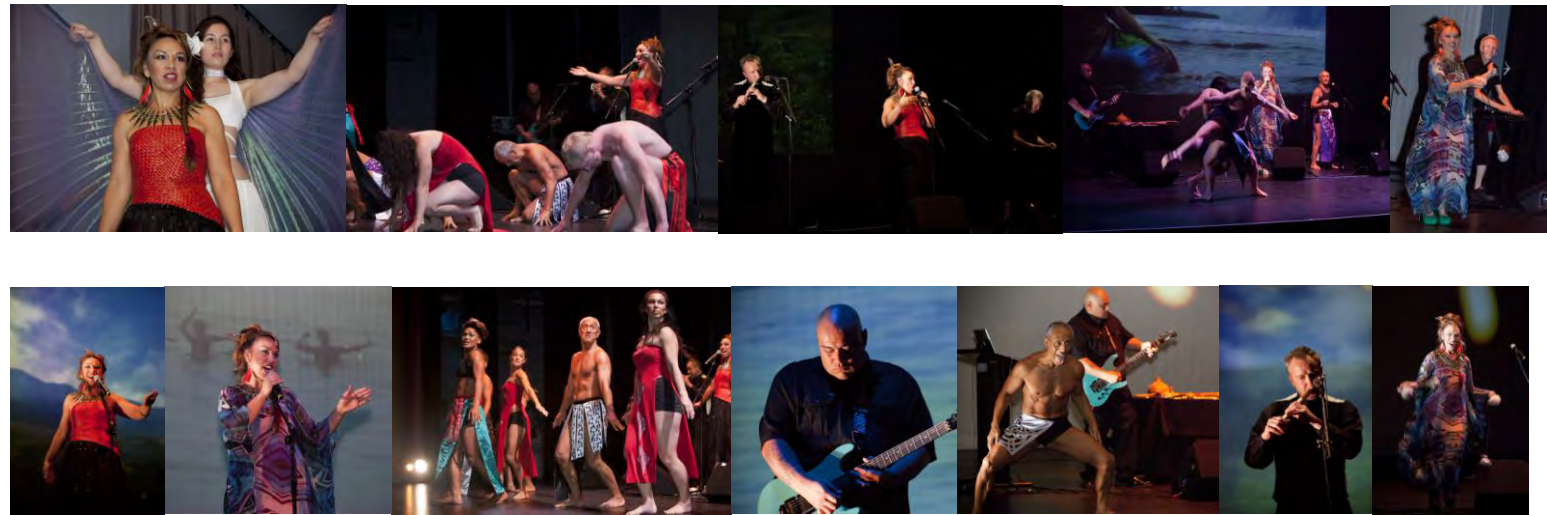
MUSIC SALES ...

www.oderecords.co.nz
www.amplifier.co.nz



Kia ora to our supporters ...

H O P U K I A ALBUM LAUNCH SHOW, NZ



11th Pacific Arts Festival, Solomon Islands





Toni Huata performing with Paddy Free at the 11th Pacific Arts Festival, Solomon Islands, June 2012.

Dub, dance and ELECTRONICA

AN EXPLORATION OF MUSIC STYLES HAS PAID OFF FOR WELLINGTON SINGER **TONI HUATA** WHOSE FOURTH ALBUM, **HOPUKIA**, HAS OPENED UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES. BY LAWRENCE GULLERY.

AN INTERNATIONAL tour beckons for singer Toni Huata marking her "musical makeover" and the success of her fourth album *Hopukia* which is her first to rank in the Official New Zealand Music Chart.

The Wellington-based performer plans to take *Hopukia* to audiences in the Pacific, Australia and then Europe, the UK and Asia in 2013.

The album featured among the Top 20 New Zealand Albums since its release in July 2012 and is likely to continue to perform well in 2013 as Huata takes the collection of 10 bi-lingual songs overseas.

Its first outing was during Maori language week in July 2012, then at the Pacific Festival of the Arts in the Solomon Island in September and a country-wide New Zealand tour in October.

"People have given positive feedback to the album and our show," Huata said.

"I heard the Solomon islanders chanting when we were there and thought, that sounds like a haka, hey that's our haka (from *Hopukia Te Tao*) so we have made a positive impact with this music."

She describes work on *Hopukia* as a "musical makeover" because it is her first in the dub and electronica genre, working with New Zealand artists Paddy Free and Gareth Farr:

"I have always loved dub, dance and electronica and have had elements of this in my previous albums.

"For *Hopukia* I guess it was more of an exploration of styles, talent and culture in collaborating with two wonderful people, Paddy Free and Gareth Farr:

"With Paddy as the producer; his style is strong in these two forms hence came the musical makeover title I think but really this is honouring what I wish to explore at this point in time and the compositions on this album. There are other

styles in there too.

Free and Farr are also known for their work with Dr Richard Nunns and the group *Nga Tae*, which fuses traditional Maori music instruments with electronica.

Huata said there was "lots of laughter" working with the pair and other musicians who contributed to the recording sessions but there was also "respect in listening to one another for direction".

"Gareth is fun and what amazes me is his ability to compose knowing my voice plus capturing the core intent of my emotions in these waiata.

"We did this of the first time in the aerial-theatrical show *Maui – One Man Against the Gods*, then my third album *Whiti* for the song *Taku Tamaiti e* and now in *Hopukia* for *Matariki, A Muri Ra* and the title song *Hopukia Te Tao*."

Huata wrote the lyrics while Farr composed the vocal score and music.

'The stage is the place I love ... and I am very thankful I am doing something I love'

"Gareth is a true composer and the only person I have worked with in this year.

"Paddy was a dream to work with. Relaxed and so accommodating by bringing his studio equipment from Piha to our home studio in Otari.

"Often just a couple of takes and for some songs the first take are the ones you hear on the album. Paddy is also the first producer that has continued to perform with me since."

Kaupapa Maori definitely gives music an edge over the rest but what else is needed to make a good song?

"A lot of my mentors would say a good melody, others would say good lyrics, good kaupapa, knowing your audience.

"For the experiences I've had, all the above have happened with a variety of songs.

"I think kaupapa Maori music is so vast and every artist interprets this differently.

"There has been great success in extending kaupapa Maori music to wider audiences and at the end of the day if people are touched or love what you share, that is the important thing."

Huata attended the Australasian World Music Expo in Melbourne in November where she also performed at a show called Flavours of Aotearoa.

It was also a chance to promote Hopukia and network with other signers, producers

and managers to create opportunities for the international tour.

"There is a big difference meeting face to face compared to over the internet but it is important to have a good site set up where people can see and hear your work.

"Therefore www.tonihuata.com will be where I refer a lot of these people to."

At the time of this interview, Huata and Paddy Free were working on a single for Maori radio and plans to work on another album project this year.

"I have a few ideas for albums and one would be to explore these styles further and another would be to do something vocal acoustic."

Huata likes working in the studio because it is a place where "you can create" but performing to a live audience is what she likes best of all.

"...the stage is the place I love. It brings me joy just to do this and I feel very lucky and thankful to be doing something I love."

Although Huata is based in Wellington, she grew up in Hastings, Hawke's Bay and her iwi connections are with Ngati Kahungunu and Rongowhakaata.

She also is of Lebanese, German, Scandinavian and Irish decent.

She graduated from the Whitireia Polytechnic, Porirua, studying music and then refined skills as a performer at Jim Moriarty's Te Rakau Hua o Te Wao Tapu touring theatre company.

She has performed in various theatrical productions for New Zealand theatres before embarking on a solo music career which has opened up opportunities to perform in London jazz clubs and European arts festivals.

But Huata says it is the New Zealand summer music festival season she enjoys the most.

"I love all the warm places like Hawaii, Cook Islands, Samoa, Solomons, Philippines, Australia.

"Our experiences in the UK and Europe have been generally to indoor venues but this is great too and I look forward to returning there again."

ALBUM REVIEW:

Hopukia, Toni Huata



SINGER-SONGWRITER TONI

Huata has outdone herself with her fourth album Hopukia, which she released in July 2012. With her other albums they all had that "Toni Huata" flavour per se, which was recognisable even before you heard her sing. But this album is her first in the dub and electronic genre, and her first bilingual collection of songs which is refreshing.

She collaborated with top New Zealand musicians Paddy Free and Gareth Farr; therefore this album has significantly re-energised her career. So much so the ten track album debuted at number seven in the official New Zealand album charts in the last week of July.

Her first track Aio which is all in Maori was definitely a great choice as an introduction

to the album, which gave you an insight into what to expect throughout the album. The vocals were beautiful, and I really enjoyed the composition of both the music and the lyrics.

The flow of the album is a mixture of slow and fast, but it still sticks to the electronic dub genre. Her ninth track is a song that debuted on her 'Te Maori E' album. It celebrates her family dialect and cultural heritage of Maori, Lebanese, Irish and German. This version of the song has a much more softer approach which I enjoyed better than the original! I think this is a great album for all Kiwis, it is distinct in nature and Toni Huata and her team should be proud of mixing it up to suit a wider and younger range of audience.

8/10, by Apikara Te Rangi



More reviews, pgs 26-27.



TRACK BY TRACK



Toni Huata explains what's special about each of the tracks on her new album, Hopukia.

Track 1, AIO: Gives me energy when I'm driving and I always remember our Maui whanau performing this to 3000 people in The Cloud during the Rugby World Cup in 2011.

Track 2, Breathe: Reminds me of youth, collaboration and the sunshine in the Solomon Islands.

Track 3, Dream Everlasting: Calms me down but still provides momentum and reminds me visually of all the dreams I had that I write about in this song.

Track 4, Arise: This really boils the blood and ihi. My kids go hard singing with this waiata in the car.

Track 5, A Muri Ra: This calms me down from Arise and is more delicate and reflective. I think about my tamariki and descendants with their experiences yet to come.

Track 6, Hopukia te tao: Reminds me of my whanau and affirms capturing the opportunities in life. It's a great one if I'm ever in doubt. I love the tribal style with this waiata which made me so proud seeing 40-plus dancers perform this during World of Wearable Arts in Wellington in 2012. This waiata is one that I perform solo and open our bigger music shows with. It makes an impact.

Track 7, Home: Just love this one. Really simple two chord song. Reminds me of my family and a jim-jak sing-a-long. It also reminds me of the wonderful collaborations and in the music video with Pacific Underground, Koile, NZ Artists delegation at the 11th Pacific Arts Festival, happy times.

Track 8, Time: I wrote this for my tane Adrian and invokes a lot of aroha for me.

Track 9, Toku Reo - Remix: I love this remix from Paddy Free. The after midnight in the chill-out lounge version he calls it. Again this version relaxes me and affirms a more relaxed attitude towards te reo Maori and my voice.

Track 10, Motariki: Creates a very still space, where the mind and spirit can wonder, very ethereal. I loved what the dancers did with this at our launch.

Brave and true like her ancestors



Twenty years in the business and Toni Huata is becoming a living legend in the world of New Zealand performance. The Wellington-based singer, songwriter, actress, director, and all around promoter of Maori arts and culture, with roots in Ngati Kahungunu and Rongowhakaata tribes, was the first in the world to croon in her native tongue on the London stage of Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club. Her new album, with well-known electronic artist Paddy Free and award-winning composer Gareth Farr, is a bit different. In honour of Maori Language Week, Huata unveils Hopukia this weekend at Te Papa, accompanied by Taiaroa Royal and contemporary dance company Atamira. She answered questions from Amanda Witherell during breaks from performing at the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts in the Solomon Islands.

Why did you incorporate English on your new album as opposed to pure Te Reo Maori? I'm hoping this will bring more people to Te Reo Maori. Te Mangai Paho opened the door to fund albums with English content so I decided to explore it. Hopukia means to grasp. It's about grasping those opportunities and seizing the day. My songs are built around this kaupapa.

Is there a shift in sound, too? Paddy Free and Gareth Farr are a dream team and they bring the best of their worlds to this project. Musically, the sound is from ambient and dub to very high energy electronica, with hints of classical in the Gareth collaborations. This collaboration is quite tribal, driving, and earthed.

What inspired the songs on the new album? My ancestor, Whakaaha. In his short but brave life he did some amazing acts, like grasping the Huata spear in mid-flight before it killed his leader Haenga. From that act we were bestowed our surname Huata. My song Hopukia te Tao is about being loyal, brave, and true. Another song, A Muri ra, is about my hopes and dreams for my children and descendants. Other themes are home, love, land, culture, language, environment, dreams, and Matariki.

Are you doing any theatre or performing alongside promoting the new album? After the launch I am performing at the Wharewaka on July 27 with other Maori music artists and then heading to Auckland for more shows. We'll be in the UK and Europe in October, Australia in November and then a wider international tour after that. WOW will be using my song Hopukia te tao. I saw He Reo Aroha whilst in the Solomons and it made me miss theatre so I may look further into that. We are hoping to take Maui – One Man Against the Gods to Hawaii in 2013.

You were raised by your grandparents in Hastings – is yours a musical whanau? I had a musical upbringing with choir, kapahaka, tap and modern dancing and just the whanau constantly playing the guitar and ukulele around the house. My grandparents were a huge influence in my life and I went to a lot of hui with them. I've always had a lot of love and support from my parents, aunties, uncles, siblings and cousins. I didn't foresee a life as a performer and started my working career as a hairdresser, which has certainly contributed to our appearance and presence on stage.

You have two children – are they as musical as their Mum? They are. Our boy, Te Okanga, is eight and has always had a strong voice and clear reo. He is very musical and artistic. Our girl, Ropine, is three and she is very quick to pick up movement and mimic vocal calls, tone and singing. They keep it real for me.

This is your third time at the Festival of Pacific Arts – do you feel drawn to perform more traditional Maori music in this context? I perform where my heart is at the time. Acoustic to highly produced, delicate to haka, Maori to bilingual...it all works as the people here are so embracing of what we share.

What's it like being part of the Festival? The time of my life! Not only getting to know our 120 artists in our delegation, but the Solomon people have really put so much into this festival – fireworks every night, built villages, stages, auditoriums. We went to Malita, which is three and a half hours one way by boat to perform the other day and it was a completely different and very authentic world. I absolutely loved it even though a lot of us got sick from the journey. It was worth it to experience true Solomon Island language and culture.

Hopukia, Soundings Theatre, Te Papa, 1pm, July 22.

Toni Huata - Capturing the Moment

Author: Martyn Pepperell

The sleeve notes for 'Whiti', **Toni Huata's** third album, released in 2010, describes the lushly presented CD as '... a rainbow of styles that take you on a blissful journey through haka dance rhythms, acoustic roots, urban pop grooves to emotional ballads'. With her fourth album the Hastings-born songstress continues the rainbow approach, the lead role on 'Hopukia' taken by a dub-electronica aesthetic, directed by two of our better-known rhythm-oriented musician/composers. **Martin Pepperell** spoke with this prolific and passionate Maori language recording artist.

Several years ago, internationally lauded singer and stage performer **Toni Huata** was working on a show with choreographer Louise Potiki Bryant. Louise's husband, **Paddy Free** of Pitch Black, was handling the music. Speaking from her home in Otari, near Wellington, Toni reflects on her feelings while watching him perform. "When he came on, I just noticed how intricate but sensitive his music was to that project. It captured an element of spiritualism and

ambience as well as, when needed, those earth rhythms and tribal rhythms and dance rhythms that were required for the whole project. I was really impressed by that, and in the back of my mind I thought, I'd really like to work with Paddy one day."

Over the course of last year and early this year, Toni had the opportunity to do exactly that, while creating her fourth album 'Hopukia' a suite of bilingual dub and electronica songs, with production divided between Free and another good friend of hers, celebrated percussionist and composer **Gareth Farr**.

Released in late July, 'Hopukia' impressively debuted inside the NZ album chart's Top 10, granting Toni her first ever chart success. She has already taken the record and its associated live show to the Pacific Festival of the Arts in the Solomon Islands, finding as she in past tours of Europe, America, Australia and the UK, a strong degree of love and support for her musical vision. 'Hopukia' follows three well produced, and beautifully presented contemporary Maori language recordings, which have seen her become well received on the international world music circuit.

A hairdresser in a former life, Toni Huata (Ngati Kahungunu, Rongowhakaata) also tutors in voice, movement and stage craft. She says she has had a passion for dance music and electronica stretching back to her younger years.

"I love the energy of instrumental beats," she says. "You can dance and zone out, go into your own world and allow the energy to flow around you. Freedom is what we all seek, and that is what that music does, and I love it."

With 'Hopukia', Toni saw these structures and forms as the perfect support to a thematic concept she had developed.

"Hopukia means 'to grasp or capture'," she explains. "I am always inspired by my family, and those words come from the family proverb, 'E rere e tu huata hopukia, E ere e te manuka tomokia'. That is how we got our surname. So I wrote three songs with that concept and that idea in mind. One [Whakaaha] was about my ancestor Whakaaha, who caught the huata spear in mid flight [during a battle] and saved his leader Haenga. Through doing that in his short but very brave life, we received our surname Huata."

Together with Gareth Farr she wrote another song called *Hopukia Te Tao*, about what the concept of Hopukia represents for herself and her family. "I look at my family and a lot of them are go-getter type people, they make their dreams a reality. So with the song I wrote it with that in mind. Even how I relate this to my own family and my own children. It is about fighting for them if you have to. Being brave if you have to speak up, not sitting on the fence, actually choosing and making choices in your life."

Rounding out a foundation trilogy, she created a piece called *A Muri Ra*, which is essentially wishes of well-being for her descendents, the environment and the future.

Adding in seven other songs of strength, love, unity and growth, between writing sessions with Farr, studio sessions with Paddy Free and work with plenty of other session musicians and friends, Toni was able to release a record which, as with her past albums, marks a moment in time for her.

"Paddy and Lou[ise] live in Piha, so he just brought his portable studio down to my place in Hautere. It was quite funny because Paddy and Lou live in a lovely lush beach area, and so do we. The environments where the album was mixed, mastered and created have all the beauty of nature and the elements. Paddy came down for five one-week sessions. It was awesome working with him. He is a very generous person. A very joyful person. I think we had a good synergy. We're actually going to do another single shortly for Maori radio."

Similarly, she speaks fondly of Gareth Farr, someone she has worked with on and off since they both worked on Tanemahuta Gray's musical theatre show, Maui: One Man Against the Gods.

"Gareth is a composer in the truest sense of the word," she says. "He composes everything from the vocal score to the music. He knows where my voice shines best in terms of pitch and everything. I think he can just capture the seed of my emotions. We're good friends, we make each other laugh. He is a really hard case person to work with. It is always fun working with him and he works quickly, and is a very talented person, so the relationship will definitely continue."

Older, more experienced and nowadays a fully engaged parent, for Toni, the goalposts of success have been shifting since her third album 'Whiti' (which was dedicated to her children). Speaking in early October 2012, she defines the end game as follows:

"It is about making your dreams happen in a good way. Making sure the people that you work with are people that are your friends, your family, and at the end of the day that you do it so that you are still respectful of them. You treat other people well and others will treat you well. I suppose it comes with a bit of maturity and experience as well.

"You might be a solo artist but you never ever do something alone. It is a group effort. It is a family effort. It is for everyone involved. For me it is important to always remember that. I always just look at the joy of everyone coming together with their talents for a purpose that is bigger than any one individual."

www.tonihuata.com



Te reo singer who shines the light

By REBECCA THOMSON

Singer Toni Huata has gone from being a hairdresser to performing at venues around the world.

Now she is releasing her third album, *Whiti*, in time for Maori Language week.

The album is a mixture of dance, soul, reggae and orchestral music and features songs in Maori and English.

"I want to invite people into the Maori language. There are Maori and non-Maori who don't speak Maori, and this album is supportive in terms of bringing them into it," said Huata.

Whiti means to shine and Huata's songs are about "the light shining on life and the feeling of joy".

Huata's two young children bring her a lot of joy and are the inspiration for many of her songs.

"Being a parent, that's a whole amazing experience. The children symbolise a lot of joy and they give out that joy without even knowing they're doing so."

Of Ngati Kahungutu and Rongowhakaata descent, Huata grew up in a musical household in Hastings.

She was raised by her grandparents and remembers going to church and being enthralled by the choir, but her career was decided from a young age.

"My grandmother was a soprano. Also my brothers were always playing guitar in their bedrooms and the family would have get-togethers and sing-a-longs. I was even at a musical school and was involved in the choir and then kapa haka. I always loved it, but I didn't think I would do it. I was told at young age I was going to be a hairdresser."

She trained as a hairdresser, but did not

enjoy the work, so enrolled in a performing arts course at Whitireia Polytechnic in 1994.

"I always thought there must be more to life than making people look good on the outside."

During her study, Huata met Jim Moriarty and in 1995 joined his theatre company Te Rakau Hua o Te Wao Tapu.

The group toured the country staging theatrical productions, something Huata enjoyed.

"Through doing that I was able to see the whole of New Zealand. It took us everywhere, from Te Rerenga Wairora [at the top of the North Island] to Stewart Island."

More recently she worked on stage extravaganza *Maui - One Man Against the Gods*. "I was asked to write [songs] for the show. It was one of the best productions I've have been involved with. I loved the experience. It was like a family and working with creative and like-minded people was just awesome."

Huata released her debut album *Te Maori E* in 2001 and followed it up with *Everlasting* in 2004. She toured both albums overseas, playing in Hawaii, France, Spain, Holland and Germany. Huata has also performed at London jazz club Ronnie Scotts.

"Overseas they are more curious because world music is a big industry. Everything with cultural rhythms, beats or language is very popular. They really want know about the Maori sound."

Wonderful waiata: Toni Huata at Te Papa in front of the Te Hau ki Turanga meeting house, to which she has ancestral links.





Sassy and Sexy

Back in the early 90s when Wellington was home to me, I can recall live music was well and truly 'alive' in venues scattered from the Kapiti Coast, Upper and Lower Hutt to, of course, the CBD proper.

Being in my 20s at the time, Mount Victoria was the perfect flattering location for this young and hungry performer and I wasn't alone. There was a group of us coming through the ranks and trying to catch up to the headliners of the time like Frankie Stevens (which never happened) while building our careers.

Lisa Tomlins, Mara Finau, Grant Sullivan, Shalleen Hern, Cherie Mathieson, Tim Breen, and yours truly to name a few. At the same time a young wahine came on to the scene who was committed to building a profile in original Māori music, while the rest of us were industriously earning a living from singing covers, her name: Toni Huata (Ngati Kahungunu/Rongowhakaata).

So in 2010, she's no stranger to the music business within and beyond Aotearoa. On the eve of releasing her third album entitled *Whiti* (to shine, transcend and be transported) she continues to maintain her wow factor. I have always respected the Toni's talents; she was the girl who didn't bother with the covers scene, rather she set out to break moulds and advocate for contemporary music in Te Reo Māori.

About the same time Hinewehi Mohi, Moana Maniapoto and Dalvanus Prime were making inroads. They were the trailblazers of our time; they took our language to foreign and exotic shores, and did it with great pride and style.

Toni has toured and performed in England, Basque, Spain, Holland, Germany, Canada, Australia, Hawaii, Rarotonga, Palau, America Samoa and more recently in Manila, the Philippines – a feat that commands enormous respect.

Her production team reads like a dream team of music gods: Maaka McGregor who coproduced; Gareth Farr who continues to contribute his skills; as well as long time friend

Charles Royal; the album is laced with backing vocal talents courtesy of Karl Teariki and Hira Huata, but that's no surprise; it's Toni's attention to detail and quality has always been evident in her work and keeps her hovering at the top.

Speaking of hovering, Toni's role in the aerial theatre production of *Maui* – one man against the gods was phenomenal. How, as Hine, she managed to swing weightlessly while suspended from the ceiling, sing flawlessly, and pukana was unforgettable visuals and audio.

The reviews simply confirmed what we already knew:

"Toni Huata brings serene strength to Hine, and shows great focus and vocal control, by continuing to sing with effortless beauty, as she flies across the stage." *Theatre review, NZ*

"Her stunning voice has been heard before but *Te Māori* is a visual and aural delight" *Real Groovy, NZ*.

On the occasions where I've seen Toni perform live, she has always delivered the goods. Her vocal range has the ability to soar through alto, contralto and soprano notes while her wairua commands respect and attention. Quite often she is adorned in Māori Moda (Italian for fashion) that adds to her strength and ahua (charisma) as a leading Māori songstress. My respect for her also comes from knowing she has intricately balanced motherhood, producing, acting, and performance with focus, capability and determination.

Constantly in demand for engagements both here and abroad, including the Europe International Arts Festival, audiences are captivated by her delivery of music. While working overseas, she adds to the allurement of our exotic shores to tourists making Māori language 'sexy'.

So it's appropriate she releases *Whiti* on the eve of Māori language week. Timing ... perfect!

For more information on Toni check out her website.

www.myspace.com/tonihuata ♦

TONI HUATA – MUSIC VIDEOS



TV appearances, International shows and festivals





Toni 'Solo' at the Chris Witoko Ball, NZ



Toni and Dancers at Whiti launch, Te Papa, NZ



Toni and 'ORA' for The Gold Awards, NZ

>> sound bites

BORN TO SHINE

Toni Huata is a Maori diva. Of Ngati Kahungunu and Rongowhakaata descent she has performed music since she was a child. SPASIFIK Intern ZORA FEILO speaks with the songstress about her latest album, *Whiti*.

Translated to English, whiti means 'to shine'. It's an apt name for Toni Huata's latest musical offering as the artist, who is well known for her dramatic and entertaining live performances, fills the 10-track album with a collection of polished songs that evoke a warm uplifting feeling.

With a strong repertoire of te reo Maori music, her latest collection is very much close to her heart.

"My music is about enlightenment, joy, creativity and the freedom to shine.

"I was surrounded by music everywhere growing up, on the marae, at meetings, in kapa haka, through the church choir, at my high school Turakina Maori Girls, and just being surrounded by my older brothers and family who were fully into music."

Whiti is Toni's third album, released in July at Te Papa Tongarewa. And it's another feather to her cap of artistic success. Throughout her career she's performed at national and international arts, music and dance festivals, including the European arts festival and the 10th Festival of Pacific arts in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Toni has also opened for The Neville brothers and performed in Britain, Spain, Holland, Germany, Canada, Australia, Hawaii and across the Pacific Islands. She's a tutor, director and actor, lending her voice to Peter Jackson's blockbuster *King Kong* and gracing the national stage in the theatre show *Maui – One man against the gods*.

"I love the mauri (life force) of live song and I like to bring this aspect to my performances. Music and performance is universal and transcends language boundaries."

Her hope for this latest album is for people to feel the spirit of her music.

"I collaborated with music producer Maaka McGregor for this album. We had a wonderful journey making music and our partnership brought out a wonderful sound.

"Maaka has been very influential and what we bring together is what is best for the song. Collaborating with other people is part of the creative process and it is how we find out what works and what does not. I also worked with Karl Teariki a musician who was really intuitive to my sound. That helps, because the journey is just as important as the goal."

This latest career milestone, says Toni, is a celebration of love, light and life. ■





Photo: Owen Allison

Maori Mixture

Toni Huata makes music based on her Maori culture that also reflects some Lebanese, Irish, German and Scandinavian genes in her ancestry. Mike Cooper is intrigued.

Although smaller than Auckland, Wellington is New Zealand's capital city and a much funkier place. Split into two islands, the Maori name for the northern island of NZ is Te Upoko O Te Ika A Maui (Head Of Maui's Fish). As with many Polynesian island nations, Maui is credited with pulling Aotearoa (New Zealand) up from the ocean depths while fishing. Kupu, the voyager, discovered New Zealand in the 10th century and the Maori settled in the islands. The harbour we call Wellington, they call Te Whanganui A Tara or The Great Harbour Of Tara. Only two kilometres wide, it is home to the Te Papa (Our Place) museum, New Zealand's premier museum and the place to go for a good overall view of Maori history and culture. Wellington and its surrounding areas are mostly European, with 12% Maori, 8%

Pacific Islanders and 7% Asian – and home to the Maori bands Wai (Maaka McGregor and Mina Ripia), Dean Hapeta and Upper Hutt Posse, Ngahiwi Apanui and Toni Huata. Wellington is where the music is now in Aotearoa.

Toni Huata's album *Mauri To* is a celebration and development of a set of songs written by her late grandfather, Te Okanga Kahutapere Huata, in a style of language known to the Maori as *Moteatea*, which might be compared or equated to that of Shakespeare. Musically the album is propelled by producer/ musician Maaka McGregor, who some of you will know if you bought the *Wai 100%* CD, one of the best records in recent years to come from the Oceania region. Maaka has developed a unique style of production and composition which, although it is contemporary

electronica, avoids drawing obviously on Afro-American beats, hip-hop and R&B cliché. Toni co-produced her first CD, *Te Maori E*, which was built around one of her grandfather's compositions of the same name. It floated on a sea of different musical influences and cultural references, including jazz, jungle and flamenco. On the new set she has teamed up with Maaka to produce something equally diverse, but embedded in the swell of Maaka's unique Polynesian take on electronica.

I sent her a few emails after failing to hook up with her earlier this year, and asked her about her family background, which is a pretty interesting ethnic mix, and how she thinks it affects her musical approach.

"My ancestral lineage is Maori, Lebanese, Irish, German and Scandinavian. I was brought up in the East Coast of the

North Island in Hastings, but travelled a lot back and forwards to Wairoa and Gisborne, where both my grandparents are from. My mother is Ropine Huata. I am Maori through both grandparents: my grandmother, Ngaro Huata née Rangi, being full-blooded from Rongowhakaata, Gisborne, East Coast and my grandfather, Te Okanga Kahutapere Huata, or 'dad' as we knew him, being from Wairoa, Ngati Kahungunu. He has a German ancestor, Adolphus Frederick Henerici, who was a carpenter from Hamburg. He was dad's great grandfather. I was a Whangai (which literally means to feed) to my grandparents, meaning I was brought up by them and being their first grandchild I had all the love, input and support from them, plus my mother and family around me. This is a traditional practise in our family and still within most Maori families."

"I grew up in a musical family with someone always playing a guitar, ukulele, piano, or singing in the house; going to church with my grandparents and being sent to dance lessons as a child. This led to school musicals and eventually touring nationally with theatre companies and now with our own company WaaHuu Creations. My father, Jeff Beacham, was a drummer and played with some great New Zealand personalities such as Prince Tui Teke and Howard Morrison. He is now a minister in New York. His mother, my grandmother Agnes Beacham née Joseph 'Fakri', was full-blooded Lebanese and was a very strong artistic woman. My grandfather, Patrick Beacham Erickson, was of Irish and Scandinavian descent. He was a very humble and kind personality."

"For the music on the *Mauri To* CD, I wanted to weave my ancestral lineage and family by mixing the bouzouki, with instruments such as *poi*, *rakau*, *putorino* and other traditional Maori instruments; also vocal styles from the Middle East, which to me are very similar to Moteatea (chant) and *Karanga* (calling), with wide Pacific rhythms. So far people love the dramatic and warm sound of *Mauri To*; they acknowledge the direction we have taken from the debut album *Te Maori E*. I have even had feedback that people can hear a Scandinavian sound in the music which is great! There doesn't seem to be another Maori language recording artist that has combined these sorts of instruments from their own various lineage."

Her grandfather ('dad') seems to have been quite a personality. "My grandfather Te Okanga was a renowned orator, teacher and composer from our Iwi (tribe) 'nation' of Ngati Kahungunu. When he passed on, it had a profound effect on me and affirmed to me never to take my Maoritanga for granted. I asked myself the question how will I give back to our people and the future generations from now on? At the time, I was a school leaver and had just started a career in hairdressing. I decided to act on my dreams and pursue studies in my passions – music, performance and acting which led to touring, teaching, producing etc. My love for dad and everything he stood for was the inspiration to produce both my albums in the Maori language, with a new approach to the music and also to use the beautiful melodic and traditional Moteatea chants of my grandfather, Te Okanga Huata."

I asked Toni how she met up with Maaka from Wai and whether they had

worked together before the *Mauri To* collection. "I think Maaka and I met around 10 years ago when he was travelling with the Neville Brothers on their NZ tour. I was still hairdressing at the time and studying Music at Whitireia Polytech. Over the years our paths had crossed as we all got focused on our own music and both Wai and I toured internationally. We did a number of Radio Play projects and he recorded my first demo for *Te Maori E*. I felt he would be a great producer for the direction of *Mauri To* (Everlasting Force). He worked around my vocals and was sensitive to the sound of Moteatea. Plus for this album, I wanted to work with someone that I could trust would run the project well and would be dedicated and focused, not to mention the talent and inspiration he would bring. I co-produced my first album and I was ready to step back from that role more for this one."

WaaHuu Creations is a consulting agency run by Toni and her husband. Their aim is to promote Maori performing arts, language and culture, to this end they are involved in motivational speaking, facilitating workshops and musical distribution. "We (my husband and I) have a partnership that we conduct all our shows, productions and tours through. We also facilitate drama workshops for youth and various organisations, plus projects for other organisations. If anyone would like to see further details they can go onto the website – www.tonihuata.com."

I'm pretty impressed with the NZ Maori/Polynesian music scene. It seems to be more involved than a lot of other Polynesian scenes, with a broader view of contemporary music. Apart from identification with Afro-American musics like rap and hip-hop, there seems to be a 'local' (NZ) musical identity and sound. Maybe a lot of it in fact is due to Maaka. I asked Toni what she thought.

"I think Maaka is definitely an innovator of contemporary Maori language music, especially from our core sense of sounds and vocal rhythms with huge international appeal. He is great to work with and be driven by. Anyone who enjoys what they hear is what we target. There are a few other awesome producers that hail from Aotearoa – New Zealand – especially so here in Wellington. I really enjoyed working with George Nepia 111, Dj Mu and 50Hz on *Te Maori E*. They all are doing so well with their own music and we all contribute to the development of our NZ Maori/Polynesian music scene. I started out doing almost an R&B/hip-hop style of Maori language music and that style is very popular with our youth here, due to high exposure of US artists. Now that there is a lot more music being produced in Maori with a huge range of styles, we have a strong Maori/Pacific flavour coming out. Big thanks to Te Mangai Paaho – Maori Language Broadcasting Agency for supporting that initiative and Te Ahukaramu Charles Royal for instigating them to fund album projects back in 1997."

Toni was the first Maori artist to appear at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club in 2001, which was part of a long tour that took her through Honolulu, London, Amsterdam and an appearance at Womex. In fact, she has done quite a bit of playing outside New Zealand, so I asked her how this came about. "The music, chemistry, and face-to-face meeting is the key. It's



Photo: Stacey Noel

been great travelling around the globe, especially to the UK, Europe and the Pacific. We just decided to spread our wings internationally after the launch of *Te Maori E* and initially worked with Trade & Enterprise to check out overseas festivals to perform at. We were lucky that my husband Adrian's parents live in Tooting, London and that my father Jeff lives in New York. We have met and worked with some awesome people, experiencing different cultures. Music and languages have been an enlightening experience for us."

I mention the stunning clothes she is wearing on the album cover. They look as if they have been designed by some pretty creative designers. "Yes, costuming and the presentation of our shows through music, dance and fashion is really important to me. I am supported by some beautifully talented designers: Suzanne Tamaki, Native Style, Tribal Fibres, Deciumcompri, Lisa McKendry and Kaakahu Korowai."

I love the cultural mix on her record, even though often no specific reference (musical or otherwise) is really made. Instead, the instruments she chooses carry such heavy significance – a well-integrated mix of non-Polynesian instruments and local traditional instruments – it works very well. "I am particularly interested in this, in people who can mix up these cultural things and make something truly new that's not pastiche. Yes, fusion in a tasty way is important to me. Honouring all styles and origins, being totally open and creative has been the key."

WaaHuu Creations' vision: "Energise, liberate and educate by providing a positive environment in which to learn – Wero-hia – challenge yourself, pass the limits – grasp the idea and enter it."

www.tonihuata.com
waaahuu@clear.net.nz
www.maorimusic.com

Parihaka International Peace Festival, NZ



Summer City Festival, 'Mana' Show, WCC sponsored, NZ



Te Maevanui Festival, Rarotonga, Cook Islands



Bellingen World Music Festival, Australia



"Toni Huata making global impression, Organizers around the world are keen to book Toni after hearing her indigenous sound" - Cook Strait News, NZ



Maori diva sings in London

By Yvette Adams

NEW ZEALAND Maori Diva Toni Huata hit London recently on a quest to continue her international music career. "The purpose of the trip is to come and settle on a booking agent, do some performances and support some festivals while we're here," says Huata.

"We also want to introduce people to the second album and to play the first album to those who haven't already heard it."

Huata's music, which she terms as "Pacific Indigenous Fusion" or "PIF" has evolved over time, from her first album which she labels "floral with lots of backing vocals" to the second - "a bit more simple and traditional".

"The first album Te Maori E was a fusion of jazz, jungle, dub with tradition - poi and haka rhythms," explains Huata.

"I did every style I liked and infused it with Maori things and so it's not actually one genre, except you could say 'world music' because it's not in English!"

"In making the second album with producer MaakaPhat from Mānuka Ltd in Wellington we were very clear on the sound we wanted which was 'world dance'. So the world tracks have lots of vocal percussion, lots of traditional instruments and because I have Lebanese ancestry as well we've got a bit of bazooki in there. For the dance ones

we've got poi and haka rhythms again as well as wooden log drums from the Cook Islands, rakau or stick sounds, poi sounds and the ukelele."

The new album, entitled *Mauri To*, will be released in New Zealand next year and in the UK thereafter, probably in the Northern Hemisphere summer. Once the album is released in the UK, Huata plans to return to England to back the release with extensive touring.

Huata says inspiration for her music is first and foremost from her grandfather Te Okanga Kahutapere Huata.

"Six of his songs are on the new album," says Huata.

"He wrote them and from that core basis, they've developed into these beautiful music ensembles. They are Moteatea based - very old language that is not readily used now - a very poetic language and style. It comes from his thoughts and his use of the old language."

Although Huata says she doesn't usually play the pubs/clubs circuit, a conscious decision she has made for her "well-being" - while she is in London she is honoured to be playing for the second time ever at legendary jazz club in Soho the first ever Maori person to perform there.

"They have alternative music nights at Ronnie Scott's on Sunday nights, otherwise it's straight jazz there. On these

Sundays they play different variations of music and in different languages. It's a nice venue to perform in. It's cosy - only holds about 300."

Huata will top the bill at Ronnie Scott's with La Honda, an acoustic driven folk/pop combo, UK soul newcomer Ella Jones and fellow Kiwi A Girl Called Bob aka singer/songwriter and pianist, Karen Ferry.

On top of Huata's busy music schedule, she is also actively pursuing a theatrical career.

She has been selected to star in upcoming New Zealand production *Te Aotomara* as Hinenui Te Po; in a contemporary dance production *Te Mana* as a dancer; is currently auditioning for a spot in Walt Disney's *The Lion King* for it's Australasian tour and has also recently been confirmed for funding from Creative NZ for the development of a show of her own based around the music from her *Mauri To* album.

Huata's debut album *Te Maori E* can be purchased from usual music retail outlets across London and from Kiwifruits - the New Zealand Shop in Royal Arcade, Haymarket, London.

Toni Huata plays at Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1 on Sunday November 17, 7.30pm start. Tickets £10 in advance. Call 0207439 0747 or 0870 060 0100 (credit card) or buy them online - www.ticketweb.co.uk.



WAIATA DIVA: Maori Toni Huata is performing at Ronnie Scott's jazz club in London.

Toni Headlines at Ronnie Scott's – London, UK



Basauri Town Hall, Bilbao, Basque Country November 2002.





Maori entertainer to perform at the BC

Local residents will be able to see what New Zealand Maori songwriter and vocalist Toni Huata delivered to European audiences recently, when she sings at the Banana Court this evening. Huata (pictured at right) has just returned from performing in Germany, Spain and England, and she entertains regularly in her homeland. She released her debut album 'Te Maori' in 2000 and she is due to put out her second in March next year. The main reason for Huata being in Rarotonga is to shoot a video for one of the songs on her new album.

The song, 'Whakarongo a Tai (Listen to the tide) celebrates a longing for land, the earthly rhythms and the relationship with the Pacific ocean (more on page 5). — ME



COOK ISLANDS NEWS FRIDAY 6 DECEMBER 2002

Huata to film music video

New Zealand Maori songwriter and vocalist Toni Huata is on Rarotonga to film a music video for 'Whakarongo A Tai' — one of the songs on her new album.

"The song brought me here," says Huata who is here for the first time with her husband Adrian Wagner.

Huata says Whakarongo A Tai celebrates a love for land, the passionate earthy rhythms and the intertwined relationship within Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. The song tells a story of the bridges and relationships built by our travelling ancestors.

"Takitumu is very special to me," says Huata.

The connections of the 'tokere' drums played by Cook Islander George Upu during the song is fitting, she adds.

She has developed the song, which will feature on her new album 'Mauri To — Everlasting Force' due to be released in March 2003.

Huata has just completed a UK/Europe tour and attended the World Music Expo (WOMEX) in Essen, Germany, in an attempt to increase the profile of Polynesians.

She has performed alongside the Neville Brothers and is the first Maori to perform at the world renowned jazz club — Ronnie Scotts in London.



Huata performing at the Museum of New Zealand in June this year.

Achieving a reasonable number of shows on her recent tour, she also made significant contacts and performed the Asian Carribean Circuit.

A qualified hairdresser, Huata has a music degree from Whitireia Polytechnic in Porirua, Wellington.

Huata will perform at the Banana Court tonight at 10pm. Cover charge is \$5.

— Melina Eiches

FRIDAY

4.30 - 5.30pm HAPPY HOUR

10.00pm TONI HUATA*
Aotearoa's very own "Whitney Houston"

The beautiful vocal power of Toni Huata has performed with the Neville Brothers.

Her Stunning voice has been heard and is a visual and aural delight.

one show only

10.30pm "Te Manava" Dance Troupe
Pulsating Island Show*

* Door Sales \$5 from 9pm

11.00pm Dance thru 2nite with

Raro Lager \$2.50 all nite

mixMeisterF

**"You Haven't Been to the Cook Islands
If You Haven't been to the Banana Court"**



“Toni has picked up where her grandfather left off and taken Māori music into a new realm.”

Haami Piripi

Left The show and the album, *Te Māori e*, are “an expression of everything I enjoy”

Below Toni Huata was brought up by her grandparents in Hastings



In her grandfather's footsteps

When Toni Huata's grandfather, Te Okanga Kahutapere (Aussie) Huata, died of a heart attack on the paepae at a hui in Ruatoki in 1988, her life changed profoundly.

Brought up by her grandparents in Hastings, whom she called Mum and Dad, Toni's grandmother had died seven years earlier. As a young woman, their deaths hit her hard.

Te Okanga and his brother, Canon Wi Te Tau Huata, were both tribal leaders and talented songwriters. Te Okanga has been credited with leading a renaissance in waiata and in te reo Māori after he returned from World War II.

Toni Huata (Ngāti Kahungunu, Rongowhakaata, Lebanese, Scandinavian, German, Irish), now a Wellington singer/songwriter, was brought up with action songs and waiata as part of every hui and church service (Anglican and Ringatu). Her childhood, she says, was supportive, loving and spiritual.

She was encouraged to learn various types of performance and music, ranging from tap dance to kapa haka and Sunday School drama. Schools in Hastings supported her musically, and when she went to Turakina Māori Girls College near Marton, it too filled her life with song and kapa haka performance.

It was there that Toni discovered she shared a dream of forming a musical performance band

with several of her boarding school friends, some of whom have since joined her recent show, *Te Māori e*.

“That's been a real buzz for me,” she says. “It's been really good for them to re-activate the performer in themselves.”

Just before her grandfather's death, Toni had started a career as a hairdresser and was enjoying its creativity and sociability. When Te Okanga died, her commitment to Māoritanga deepened. “I realised what a taonga Dad had been and how much knowledge he'd had to give. I decided I would never take my Māoritanga for granted and would learn as much as I could.”

Toni became the secretary of Te Rangatahi a Ngāti Kahungunu ki Poneke, which set up a series of wānanga for Ngāti Kahungunu people in Wellington to learn waiata, taiaha, whakapa and tribal history.

Along with the now well-known singers Emma Paki and Hinewehi Mohi, she was also part of the kaupapa Māori band Black Katz. This band made many public performances and recorded four albums from the mid 1980s

through to the early 1990s.

Encouraged to develop her talents further, Toni undertook a two-year music course at Whitireia Polytechnic in Porirua. After completing this course, she joined Jim Moriarty's Te Rakau Hua o Te Wao Tapu, developing her skills in performance, facilitation and management, and working in prisons and schools.

“You grow and learn a lot. You go through your own healing as well as the inmates' healing.”

In 1998, Toni left Te Rakau Hua o Te Wao Tapu and married actor/producer Adrian Wagner, who is of Te Whanau a Apanui, Te Atiawa, Austrian and South American descent. The couple have set up WaaHuu Creations, the entertainment business behind their recent shows, which specialises in performing arts tutoring, drama workshops and vocal training.

Their recent performance of *Te Māori e* at Te Papa Tongarewa features the waiata of the same name, written by Te Okanga, to welcome the return of *Te Māori* exhibition of taonga back to New Zealand in 1986. The song conveys messages about pride and celebrates the many cultures in this country.

The show and the album, *Te Māori e*, are “an expression of everything I enjoy”. Musically, she says, they combine traditional Māori waiata with flamenco, jazz, dub, dance and classical styles.

The show includes imaginative, dramatic movement and costumes by Tribal Fibres and Native Sista – accompanied by Toni's confident, rich voice and stage presence.

In July, Toni performs in Circa Theatre's production of *The Jungle Book* before travelling overseas with Adrian Wagner to introduce their music and style to festival directors and promoters in Europe and the United States. When they return to New Zealand in November, they will do a national tour of *Te Māori e*.

Toni, whose songs are all in te reo Māori, is committed to the language. “This is a way of giving back to my own culture, to my whanau and parents,” she says. “It's a way of sharing our arts with each other and the world.”

To quote Haami Piripi, Chief Executive of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo, the Māori Language Commission: “Toni has picked up where her grandfather left off and taken Māori music into a new realm.” □

WaaHuu Creations received an \$18,000 grant from Te Waka Toi to present Te Māori e in Hastings, Christchurch and Wellington.



Taking the kaupapa to the world Toni Huata turns it on!"
- **New Zealand News, UK**

"Artistic Exchange builds bridges, Huata sets the standard!" - **Porirua News, NZ**



"Dawn skies herald start of Māori New Year – Toni Huata performs." -
DomPost, NZ

Toni as Hine-nui-te-Po in Maui – One Man Against the Gods



*Toni Huata brings serene strength to Hine, and shows great focus and vocal control, by continuing to sing with effortless beauty, as she flies across the stage. – **Theatre review, NZ***



Toni performing at The World of Wearable Arts, Wellington, NZ

The show had high quality offerings for a wide variety of tastes, ended most suitably with Toni Huata singing the dramatic 'Haere Atu Ra...' **'DOMPOST, NZ**





Toni in one of her most notable love songs and music video '**Ko Wai Ka Hua**'
- A love song written by her late grandfather in remembrance of the 28th Māori Battalion and the yearning he experienced for his wife while fighting overseas in World War II.



C & P W a a H u u C r e a t i o n s
PH: 64 21 639 790, EMAIL: WaaHuu@xtra.co.nz , tonihuatacreations@gmail.com
FB: www.facebook.com/tonihuatamusic , YT: www.youtube.com/user/tonihuata
WEB: www.tonihuata.com