Making our own—two ethnographies of the vernacular in New Zealand music: tramping club singsongs and the Māori guitar strumming style

by

Michael Brown

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Abstract

This work presents two ethnographies of the vernacular in New Zealand music. The ethnographies are centred on the Wellington region, and deal respectively with tramping club singsongs and the Māori guitar strumming style. As the first studies to be made of these topics, they support an overall argument outlined in the **Introduction**, that the concept of "vernacular" is a valuable way of identifying and understanding some significant musical phenomena hitherto neglected in New Zealand music studies.

"Vernacular" is conceptualised as an informal, homemade approach that enables people to customise music-making, just as language is casually manipulated in vernacular speech. The different theories and applications which contribute to this perspective, taken from music studies and other disciplines, are examined in **Chapter 1**. A review of relevant New Zealand music literature, along with a methodological overview of the ethnographies is presented in **Chapter 2**. Each study is based upon different mixtures of techniques, including participant-observer fieldwork, oral history, interviews, and archival research. They can be summarised as follows:

Tramping club singsongs: a medium of informal self-entertainment among New Zealand wilderness recreationists in the mid-twentieth century. The ethnography focuses on two clubs in the Wellington region, the Tararua Tramping Club and the Victoria University College Tramping Club, during the 1940s-1960s period, when changing social mores, tramping's camaraderie and individualism, and the clubs' different approaches, gave their singsongs a distinctive character. **Chapters 3–5.**

The Māori guitar strumming style: a self-taught, accessible, and versatile accompaniment used widely in Māori music since the 1940s. The ethnography includes interviews from the Wellington region about the use of the Māori strumming style for party singing, a field study undertaken with the kapa haka group Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club (Wellington), and a survey of the style's use in New Zealand recorded music and its reception in public discourse. **Chapters 6–8**.

Both ethnographies show accessible forms of music-making being shaped in numerous ways through participants taking a vernacular approach. Although they also reveal that this approach may be subsumed by other musical values, in each case the special value of the vernacular is clear: with *tramping club singsongs*, it enabled these informal events to embody the liberties trampers craved in post-World War II life; and with the *Māori guitar strumming style*, it has helped Māori people for many decades to sustain their social values and cultural identities as an indigenous minority under pressure. Both studies highlight the liberties the vernacular bestows upon people to directly make-their-own music to suit changing circumstances. **Conclusion**.

The ethnographies are supported by additional appendices on a CD-ROM, including listings of tramping-singsong repertoire, selected tramping texts, musical-instrument import statistics, and a discography, while a CD and DVD provide selections of archival sound recordings, and ethnographic audio and video.

Acknowledgments

This thesis was researched and written as three ethnographies, but due to administrative requirements placed on word limits, one case study—community singing in 1930s Wellington—has been cut. Many people have contributed to this thesis and I am grateful for all the support I have received. This project was made possible due to the enthusiasm of those people whose music-making was being studied. Thank you to everybody who agreed to be interviewed and the many others who have helped by way of conversations, letters, emails, and by providing material. With each ethnography, I would like to acknowledge the help of:

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Plate 30	By permission of Danessa Hill.
Plate 32 (right)	By permission of the Māori Purposes Fund Board.

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Compact disc (CD) contents

CD1 **Singsong at Field Hut, 2 November 1974** 14.35

Various items (narration by Maurice Perry; edited excerpts). By permission of Maurice Perry and the Tararua Tramping Club.

CD2 **Tony Somerset** 1.51

'The tramper's lament' (from interview)

CD3 **Andy Andersen** 1.23

'I used to be a mountaineer' (from interview)

CD4 **John Ross** 2.44

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CD5 **Tony and the Tararuas** 2.43

'Aidle-o boy'. From *Tony and the Tararuas* 45rpm EP [ca.1961].

CD6 **Les Cleveland, Tony Nolan, Ash Burton, Ken Avery et al.** 4.56

'Don't you think it looks peculiar'/'Ro-tiddly-o'/'Anna Hooch'. From *Bush Singalong* LP (1963). By permission of Kiwi Pacific Records International Ltd.

CD7 **Michael Priest** 0.46

'Karangatia rā' (from interview)

CD8 **Jamie McCaskill** 0.55

'Hauraki e' (from interview)

CD9 **Ray Isaacs** 1.37

'E pari rā' (from interview)

CD10 **Jamie McCaskill** 0.55

'Pōkarekare ana' (from interview)

CD11 **Ray Isaacs** 3.04

'Chulu chululu' (from interview)

CD12 **Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club (junior team, with senior support)** 2.12
'Haere mai rā' (recorded Te Papa, 12 June 2011)

CD13 **Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club (junior team, with senior support)** 2.24
'Ka noho au' (recorded Te Papa, 12 June 2011)

CD14 **Michael Priest** 2.05
'Wairua tapu' (from interview)

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Digital versatile disc (DVD) contents

Audio quality on the first two films is poor in places and audibility can be improved by listening with headphones.

DVD1 **Poi item, Otaki, 1934** 3.12

'Ara ka titiro'. Excerpt from unidentified newsreel (New Zealand Film Archive, F8240). By permission of Ngāti Raukawa.

DVD2 **Waiata-ā-ringa, Wellington, 1946** 2.13

'Pa mai' and other items. Excerpt from *Weekly Review 232*, National Film Unit. By permission of Archives New Zealand. This film can be viewed at: http://audiovisual.archives.govt.nz/filmplayer/?film=weeklyreviewno232.

DVD3 **Charles Royal, 2009** 32.32

Interview and various items, recorded by Michael Brown. Excerpts can be viewed on the YouTube channel: http://www.youtube.com/user/karamu1.

This DVD and the film footage it contains must only be used in conjunction with this thesis and must not be copied, used outside the library in which it is deposited, or made available for broadcast, digital download, commercial use or any other form of distribution.

References, format, and language

Referencing in this thesis is based on the Author-Date system which is commonly used in ethnomusicology and folklore. Footnotes are used for additional explanations or discussion, not for referencing. The following style books have been consulted:

1. Derek Wallace and Janet Hughes, 1995, *Style Book*, 5th edition. Wellington: GP Publications.
2. University of Chicago Press, 2010, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Comparisons have also been made with several exemplar works in ethnomusicology and folk music studies.

With the *Tararua Tramper* newsletters, it was decided that because these are only a few pages in length, page number references could be omitted without unduly inconveniencing future researchers.

Where interview material is given in a block quotation set off from the text, the name of the interviewee is first given in bold/italics with no further reference, except people with whom multiple interviews were conducted where an additional alphabetical code (i.e. A, B, C) is added. See Bibliography for interview places/dates/codes. To maintain consistency of presentation, some email correspondence in Chapter 8 is given in the same block quotation format. Where text from two interviews/emails is combined, this is separated with "[...]".

Māori language terms are not italicised; macrons are used, except for place/personal names. However, original spelling/italics/macrons are retained from quotations, publication titles, or listed authors. Brief glosses are given for Māori words when they are first used in the text; these meanings relate to the discussion context and should not be considered comprehensive. Any translations of longer Māori quotations come from original sources; no attempt is made to translate Māori poetry or song, as this has been considered a specialist task (cf. McLean 1996:4). Other non-English words have been

italicised, apart from common abbreviations in Latin and other languages, such as "et al." and "ibid.".

Introduction

This thesis is a sequel to a study made by the writer about folk music collecting in New Zealand (Brown 2006). The earlier study focused on a field collecting and archival research movement that took place between 1955 and 1975, inspired by folk music revivals in Australia, the United States, and Great Britain. The traditional music of the indigenous Māori people of New Zealand was already being documented by this stage, with the 1955-1975 collecting movement representing the first concerted attempt to locate the folk music of Pākehā New Zealanders, the descendents of European settlers who comprise the majority of the population. My investigatory study opened up some interesting issues, which have provided the impetus for the present work and therefore need outlining here.

The books and recordings produced by the folk music collectors spotlighted various kinds of New Zealand music-making for the first time. The anthology *Shanties by the Way*, edited by Rona Bailey and Bert Roth (1967), for instance, included whaling ballads, goldfield parodies, trade union verse, pub ditties, temperance hymns, student satirical songs, and recent folk coffee-house numbers. But between the research for and publication of this book, something interesting occurred: Bailey and Roth evidently began questioning whether they were really dealing with "folksong" at all. While the term "folksong" was used to describe Bailey's early fieldwork and concert presentations (e.g., see *The Dominion*, 31/5/1957, p.11; *Hawera Star*, 14/10/1957, p.2), it is absent from the main text of *Shanties by the Way*.[1] Neither Bailey or Roth published again on the subject. The same pattern was repeated elsewhere. The New Zealand Folklore Society, for instance, formed in 1966, succeeded in documenting a wealth of material, including dance tunes and novel homemade instruments, but within ten years the organisation had collapsed, its founder Frank Fyfe lamenting that he had only ever found two complete examples of what he classed "folk songs" (Brown 2007:151).

While different circumstances pertained in each case, the folk music collectors were all confronted with the same basic problem, namely that their material did not match their expectations of what "New Zealand folk music" would be. Some songs were ephemeral

[1] Neil Colquhoun, another collector who provided musical settings for several items in *Shanties by the Way*, also recalls that Bert Roth concluded "these are not 'folksongs'" (letter to writer, 1/10/2006).

items performed during a short period; others had only survived in manuscripts or newspapers. Material that was both "folk" (i.e. passed down in oral tradition) and "New Zealand" (i.e. with substantial local content) was almost non-existent. The collectors' expectations were partly defeated by historical circumstances: the British colonisation of New Zealand only commenced in the 1840s, meaning that extended oral traditions of local English-language songs had little time in which to become established, while the highly literate character of the settler society also hindered the formation of recognisable folksong cultures. The collectors' methodologies worked against them, too. Most wanted to gather individual items to be promoted as "folk songs", rather than focus on the source communities, musical practices, and styles involved, an approach which might have led them to reappraise what constituted authentic folk music in the New Zealand context. While some interesting ideas along these lines emerged (e.g., see Annabell 1975), they were not developed further. By the mid-1970s, most of the collectors had ceased fieldwork and publishing, and the overall movement died away.[2]

Without a body of convincing "New Zealand folk songs", later music writers have also been led to the conclusion that New Zealand has only received a "diffused and slight folk-song inheritance" (Thomson 1991:65; cf. O'Sullivan and Jackson 1983:xxxiii; Harding 1992:38). Consequently, the collectors' work has tended to be only casually referenced, sometimes rather condescendingly (e.g., Maconie 2010:86). Such assessments seem to indicate that there has been nothing more to collect or study, or, indeed, discuss.

In the decades since the collecting movement ended, then, New Zealand music studies have largely failed to create any alternative account of the kinds of music-making documented within anthologies like *Shanties by the Way*. Yet such musical activity, even if not "folk" in most accepted senses of the term, still holds intrinsic interest because it shows a wide range of New Zealanders informally fashioning songs, tunes, and music-making to suit their own situations and needs. Nor are such phenomena the "diffused inheritance" of a distant past: I myself have childhood memories of singsongs that included local ballads my parents knew. Some basic questions raised by the collectors' work, then, have remained unanswered for thirty-five years. Is there another

[2] Folksinger Phil Garland has continued to collect "New Zealand folksong" on a reduced scale (2009; cf. Colquhoun 2010; Archer 1998-2012).

concept that helps explain these kinds of music-making? What research methods would best reveal the processes at work? Where do such musical activities fit into our overall understanding of New Zealand music? What is the general value of such music-making that makes it worth researching in the first place?

This thesis is an attempt to answer these questions. In doing so, I have looked to recent developments in folk music studies overseas. Rather than just collecting songs, for example, most researchers now use ethnographic methods to document the performance styles and social context of the music-making. New theoretical perspectives have emerged, too, including a trenchant critique of the very notion of “folk music” itself, as harbouring ideologies of romantic nationalism, for example, and for its theoretical instability due to simultaneous use by scholars, folk revivalists, and the music industry (see Porter 1993). Consequently, researchers interested in the music-making from which “folk music” has previously been collected, have sometimes turned to other concepts to anchor their work. One such, that seems especially promising in the New Zealand context, is “vernacular”.

The idea of “vernacular” is being increasingly accepted in a number of scholarly disciplines, including in music studies, architecture, and folklore, often as a replacement for what was previously entitled “folk”. We most commonly associate the word “vernacular” with language—informal everyday speech—and these meanings are often used analogically when applying it to other activities. This comparison is apparent, for example, in an influential definition of “vernacular” in relation to music given by the musicologist H. Wiley Hitchcock in *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction* (1969). Hitchcock contended there were two major traditions in American music:

> These I shall call the “cultivated” and “vernacular” traditions. I mean by the term “cultivated tradition” a body of music that America had to cultivate consciously, music faintly exotic, to be approached with some effort, and to be appreciated for its edification, its moral, spiritual or aesthetic values. By the “vernacular tradition” I mean a body of music more plebeian, native, not approached selfconsciously, but simply grown into as one grows into one’s vernacular tongue; music understood and appreciated simply for its utilitarian or entertainment value. (43-44)

Such a formulation has obvious potential in the task of reframing and re-evaluating the kinds of music revealed by the New Zealand folk music collectors. “Vernacular tradition”-music is conceived broadly enough to encompass the many practices they documented. The music is defined as such by how it is approached, rather than depending upon the authenticity of musical products (i.e. “folk songs”). Hitchcock’s cultivated/vernacular dichotomy also suggests an equitable perspective on the value of different kinds of music. Overall, “vernacular” provides a serviceable historiographical tool.

“Vernacular” has also been defined, theorized, and used in a variety of other ways by music writers (Bohlman 2001). Before introducing the overall aim and structure of this thesis, it is worth briefly describing how “vernacular” is conceptualised here.

The thesis argues that “vernacular” can best be understood as an informal mode of human action. A vernacular approach enables people to customise music-making as their own—just as language is casually manipulated in vernacular speech—as seen, for example, with children’s playground singing, singing in the bathroom shower, crowd chanting and improvised percussion at sports matches, and “mucking around” at band practices. Such situations can be considered “vernacular domains” of music-making (Illich 1981). In each case, people assume the casual liberty to pick available resources (e.g., songs, tunes) as if from a “commons” and shape them as suits their competencies and needs. Much makeshift and ephemeral musical change will result and, in the process, performances may acquire distinctive qualities, new products may be generated and retained for the future, some even spreading into the wider culture. As with spoken language, an informal approach to music-making is available to all people and extends beyond the work of self-identified “musicians” to activities which can be called “music without musicians” (cf. Rudofsky 1964).

The general term “the vernacular” is used in the thesis to denote the nexus of vernacular mode, domain, resources, competencies, and transformative processes outlined above. The phrase used in the thesis title, “making our own”, taken from a key work in this field of study (Pickering and Green 1987b:12), is also used to evoke in appropriately-colloquial fashion the active processes of the vernacular (performing, fashioning, claiming, adapting) and their empowering effect. Because vernacular is defined as an

approach to music-making and one that does not necessarily exclude other approaches, several common terms with more essentialist implications have also been avoided, including "vernacular song", "vernacular singer", and "vernacular music".

While this thesis is the first major attempt to apply the "vernacular" concept to New Zealand music, some relevant activities have been previously researched—most obviously by the folk music collectors. A broader "search for the vernacular" in New Zealand music studies can also be observed. The composer Douglas Lilburn (1915-2001), for instance, felt that the development of local art music would be enriched by the discovery of a "vernacular style" in New Zealand music (Shieff 1994:138). Other studies have revealed informal making-our-own approaches being taken in popular music, community music, and Māori music. Nonetheless, as with the folk music collecting, disciplinary agendas and methods have tended to give only glimpses and often in areas that were unimportant to the researchers. Overall, the literature shows that the vernacular has been perceived only partially and indistinctly in New Zealand music until now—suggesting that this distinct cultural process must be investigated on its own terms.

When planning this initial exploration of the vernacular in New Zealand music, the prevailing instinct was to look in-depth at how the vernacular operated in specific cases.[3] Crucially, the informality intrinsic to the vernacular mode would seem to compel the researcher to undertake a close local analysis, seeking indicators and outcomes that cannot be observed from a distance. Ethnography, too, seemed the best methodology to adopt given the attention that would need to be paid to performance, insider explanations and terminology, learning processes, social and cultural context, and so on. It was also decided to undertake studies of three contrasting kinds of music-making. While any could have formed the basis for a monograph, multiple studies would allow the broader potential of "vernacular" in studying New Zealand music to be demonstrated. By seeing the vernacular at work in the context of contrasting musical practices, historical periods, and communities—including both Māori and Pākehā—the thesis could therefore underline the concept's general value. While one of the three

[3] Another approach could have been to survey the many different kinds of New Zealand music in which the vernacular might be an element, but de facto surveys of likely options are to some extent already embedded in various other studies, including my own work on the 1955-1975 folk music collecting (Brown 2007; cf. Harding 1992).

completed studies (about municipal community singing in Wellington during the Great Depression) had to be removed from the thesis due to word count restrictions, the juxtaposition of the two remaining ethnographies still serves this fundamental goal. The case studies can be summarised as follows:

1. *Tramping club singsongs*: a medium of informal self-entertainment among New Zealand wilderness recreationists in the mid-twentieth century. The ethnography focuses on two clubs in the Wellington region, the Tararua Tramping Club and the Victoria University College Tramping Club, during the 1940s-1960s period, when changing social mores, tramping's camaraderie and individualism, and the clubs' different approaches, gave their singsongs a distinctive character.

2. *The Māori guitar strumming style*: a self-taught, accessible, and versatile accompaniment style used widely in Māori music since the 1940s. The ethnography includes interviews from the Wellington region about the use of the Māori strumming style for party singing, a field study undertaken with the kapa haka group Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club (Wellington), and a survey of the style's use in New Zealand recorded music and its reception in public discourse.

In combination, these ethnographies show a vernacular approach being taken with various kinds of New Zealand music-making. The tramping singsong study and parts of the Māori guitar strumming style study focus on what has often been perceived as the vernacular's *locus classicus*: music-making at small face-to-face gatherings. The kapa haka field study, by contrast, considers what elements of the vernacular might exist within a more formalised performance tradition. The ethnographies encompass both vocal and instrumental music topics; cover music-making by both Pākehā and Māori communities; and consider the interplay between the vernacular and popular music. Altogether, they range over an historical period from the 1940s to the present day. The thesis can hardly claim to traverse the entire gamut of possibilities, but it does show the vernacular to be an ingredient—to a greater or lesser extent—in a range of musical scenarios.

As little was previously written about the two topics (apart from some limited work on "tramping songs"), preliminary investigations were made to ascertain if they were

suitable. These revealed various telltale signs—such as the implicit informality of the music-making and the presence of local parodies—that supported their choice. Comments in preliminary interviews, too, as when people referred to the music arising from a need to "make your own entertainment", also signalled that a vernacular approach was involved.

The resulting ethnographies incorporate elements that are familiar from several music sub-disciplines, including ethnomusicology and folk music studies. Each has used different mixtures of techniques—including participant-observation fieldwork, interviews, and song collecting—and a variety of documentary sources like sound recordings, song books, photographs, newsletters, and archival manuscripts. The portraits developed from these materials are presented as ethnographies of music-making among specific communities, sets of individuals, places, and eras. In mainly considering music in the past, the tramping singsong study has used oral histories and documentary sources to construct an "historical ethnography" (see Thomas 2004). Undertaking two ethnographies in a single thesis has placed restrictions on time and space. Not every aspect of the music-making could always be accessed, but the materials gathered have provided ample evidence in each case.

The ethnographies have also pursued a special research agenda, each considering how the music-making was configured as a vernacular domain and the resulting effect upon performance characteristics, musical products, how the music was conceived and received, and other aspects. The role of other cultural processes (e.g., competition, commercialism) is also examined. Furthermore, each study ranges beyond the core ethnography to chart a longer historical timeframe, seeking to ascertain how the vernacular enabled people to shape music to meet their needs and changing circumstances, as well as map the spread of musical products into broader New Zealand music culture. The two studies can thus be described more specifically as "ethnographies of the vernacular".

Both ethnographies have a strong regional basis. Each was centred on the region around Wellington, the capital city of New Zealand, where the musical communities of interest were based and most of my informants lived. Practical convenience was the main factor behind this geographical choice. If this regional focus meant that the workings of the

vernacular could be examined with ethnographic specificity, depth, and detail, then it also revealed, by the evidence of publications, recordings and so on, how products of the vernacular may spread beyond communities and of ways in which the vernacular in local music-making can be mirrored in the national music culture. The purpose of the studies was to explore the vernacular at work in specific regional cases, but there is value in the idea that these workings may emerge nationally. The present ethnographies can therefore serve as a template for future comparative studies.

As research revealed the substantial nature of the musical phenomena being studied, the fact was also highlighted that neither had previously been studied in depth. Scholars researching the vernacular in other fields have sometimes observed that their subjects often seem positioned "in the liminal zones of many disciplines, in an epistemological vacuum" (Ó Cadhla 2001:77) or that they constitute *parerga*: leftover or marginal topics (Batchen 2000:262). Likewise, both subjects covered here seem to have suffered scholarly neglect by being situated on the margins of sub-disciplinary territories marked out by categories like "folk music" or "Māori music". One of the benefits of combining two ethnographies in the same thesis, then, has been to reposition such music-making in a more positive context, so that it no longer seems marginal or quaint, but rather as embodying core human impulses. Indeed, an inherent strength of "vernacular" is that it also suggests why such music-making suffers musicological neglect, namely that institutionalised notions of musical worth in modern societies tend to cast a shadow of "non-value" over activities strongly defined by "making our own" and "music without musicians" approaches.

This thesis is firmly positioned in the interdisciplinary field of New Zealand music studies, partly for the reasons outlined above. Rather than considering such music-making within the purview of folk music studies or popular music studies, for instance, where they will inevitably be positioned as marginal *parerga*, the scope of New Zealand music studies—by definition—extends to a consideration of the value of *any* kind of music-making in New Zealand.

The thesis contributes to New Zealand music studies in several ways. First, it begins to tell the story of New Zealand musical vernacular experience and perception in Pākehā and Māori contexts, but tells it in such a way as to provide models and starting points

for further research. Moreover, it opens up our perceptions, allowing us to look afresh at the music-making assayed by the folk music collectors and others, and to anticipate new areas where the vernacular might play a part. Once we become aware of such potential vernacular influences, then we might begin to discover new ways of talking about the interconnections and development of the broader music culture that will redirect our thinking about New Zealand music. Certainly, the ethnographies might provoke some fresh questions about the vernacular in New Zealand popular music, the relationships between Māori and Pākehā music-making, the influence of the natural environment on local music culture, and other matters. Overall, the thesis suggests that "vernacular" has much to offer New Zealand music studies.

"Vernacular", by itself, does not provide a stand-alone theory of music-making and a range of additional concepts have been used to develop the main argument in each ethnography. Nonetheless, undertaking two ethnographies in a single thesis has placed restrictions on the incorporation of secondary interpretations. In future, alternative theories could be applied to these topics to highlight other aspects; follow-up studies might be valuable in themselves given the limitations placed on the present research. But for now, "vernacular" occupies prime place as the shared theoretical component of both ethnographies, allowing the concept to be comprehended on its own distinctive terms and in a rounded way.

The thesis is presented in eight chapters spread across three parts.

PART ONE explains the central concepts, reviews relevant literature, and describes the research methods: **Chapter 1** develops the conceptual synthesis of "vernacular" to be employed; **Chapter 2** considers how the vernacular can be located in New Zealand music by presenting a research agenda, reviewing relevant New Zealand music literature, and giving a general description of research methods.

PART TWO presents the ethnography of singsongs in two Wellington tramping clubs, the Tararua Tramping Club and the Victoria University College Tramping Club: **Chapter 6** describes the context of Wellington tramping in the mid-twentieth century period and the various singsong settings; **Chapter 7** looks at the various components of "singsong" performance events in the two clubs; and **Chapter 8** considers trampers'

perceptions of their music-making, key historical subtexts, a commercial LP of Tararua Tramping Club material, song books, and the decline of the singsong culture.

PART THREE presents the ethnography of the Māori guitar strumming style: **Chapter 9** describes the central characteristics of the style, discusses its possible origins and use at guitar parties by informants living in the Wellington region; **Chapter 10** investigates how the style is used for kapa haka accompaniment in the context of Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club (Wellington); and **Chapter 11** surveys the style's presence on Māori music recordings, its crossover into Pākehā music-making and New Zealand popular music, and the key term "Māori strum".

The ethnographies are supported by additional appendices presented on a CD-ROM, while a CD and DVD provide selections of archival sound recordings, ethnographic audio and video.

A central goal of this thesis is to show how the vernacular enables people to directly shape their own music-making. Thus, while the ethnographies contain hints of tensions such as are common to all social formations and musical practices (and which could be the subject of future studies), my intention here is to focus primarily on how the vernacular helps create group cohesion and identification. Both ethnographies illustrate just how much might be at stake in this process, whether it was in connection with the pressures of post-World War II urban life (tramping singsongs) or the struggles of an indigenous minority to sustain their social values and cultural identities (Māori guitar strumming style). By approaching the music informally, I argue, participants obtained special latitude to combine, perform, and change musical resources to suit their needs and changing circumstances. The ethnographies highlight the humble self-sufficiency conferred by the vernacular (the root Latin word originally related to that which was "homemade" or "homeborn"). Such a domain of autarkic empowerment would seem to have special value in a contemporary world beset with economic, ecological, and political crises, a world in which many people have become highly dependent upon the provision of commodities and state services—including music. These matters are briefly discussed, after a summary of the thesis findings, in the **Conclusion**.

PART ONE

Theory, literature review, and methodology

Chapter 1
Vernacular

The two ethnographies in this thesis utilise "vernacular" as an overarching concept. The origins of the word "vernacular" date back several thousand years and its contemporary usages—most commonly in reference to informal speech or local dialects—build upon a long history of different meanings, applications, and connotations. The concept therefore requires careful elaboration of its many implications and attendant issues.

This chapter establishes the conceptual framework for "vernacular" that will be used here, arguing that "vernacular" can be best understood as an informal, least-attention-paid mode of human action available to everybody. In music-making, this approach will influence characteristics of performances, musical products, the way the music is conceived and received, and who participates. The value of the vernacular mode lies in enabling people to directly shape music as suits their resources, competencies, and needs: it is the domain of the homemade. To explain these ideas, the chapter first discusses the etymology of "vernacular", then reviews previous applications in music studies. It continues by exploring various ways of conceptualising "vernacular", drawing upon work in a variety of disciplines, and concludes with a summary of the theoretical synthesis employed here.

Etymology

Contemporary meanings of "vernacular" most commonly relate to language. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) defines it primarily as "Of a language or dialect: That is naturally spoken by the people of a particular country or district; native, indigenous", while the *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* adds "not of… learned formation" (Coulson et al. 1962). Other dictionaries give similar definitions, with most also noting that the word can be applied more generally to anything "native, indigenous" (e.g., Wyld 1934). This broader meaning corresponds to the original Latin root word, *vernaculus*—denoting "home-born", "domestic", or "native"—which was used in Ancient Rome to classify things as varied as farm produce, local festivities, military legions, and verbal expressions (Glare 1982; Lewis and Short 1969 [1879]). The language-specific meaning

seems to have become increasingly important during the Renaissance period, when local European tongues began to be collectively termed "vernaculars" to contrast them with Latin, the standard for ecclesiastical, scholarly and literary works (Ramminger 2010).

Vernaculus, in turn, is considered to derive from *verna*, which can be defined as both "a slave born in the master's house" and "a native" (Simpson 1965:235). The Roman slave *vernae* were distinguished from others who had been enslaved through wars of conquest; they could even have been fathered by a free member of a household. The *vernae* were considered to have an enhanced status, "because they were native Latin speakers and could be trained in more valuable skills" (Howard 2005:174-175). Certain pejorative associations now attached to "vernacular", including vulgarity and profanity (Wyld 1934), may be the residue of these slave-related meaning of *verna*; or alternatively they may relate to earlier conceptions of non-Latin languages as "vulgar", as immortalised in the title of Dante Alighieri's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (1996).

Some recent theories of "vernacular" draw heavily from the slave-related roots of the word, but archaeological evidence suggests that *verna* probably originally meant "a native" (Starr 1942:316). The Indo-European roots proposed by etymologists for *verna* and *vernaculus*, too, most often relate to "the home" or the act of "dwelling"—and never with slavery (Skeat 1883; Glare 1982; Lewis and Short 1969 [1879]). Some writers propose these words share a common root with Vesta, the Roman goddess of home and hearth, around whom the cult of the Vestal Virgins developed (Tucker 1931:254). *Verna*, then, probably first meant something like "child of the hearth" (Arthur Pomeroy, email 9/5/2010). The original meaning of "vernacular"—homeborn or homemade—and the metaphor of vernacular speech will remain touchstones for the discussion to follow.

"Vernacular" in music studies

Expressions like "vernacular music" and "vernacular song" have been used in music scholarship only for the last sixty or seventy years. Over roughly the same timeframe, similar terms (which will hereafter be referred to as "vernacularistic" terms) have been adopted in other fields of study, most prominently architecture (Carter and Cromley 2005:1-18) and folklore (Vlach 1996). "Vernacular" has also been used as a

sociolinguistic category (Niedzielski 2005). Recent scholarship has therefore begun to reinstate the breadth of application the word enjoyed in the Ancient world. This section will outline the history of the word's use in music scholarship.

Music writers probably first used "vernacular" to denote medieval vocal music with lyrics in European languages other than Latin (e.g., Hughes 1925:55), and some musicologists still employ expressions like "vernacular song" for this purpose (e.g., Taruskin 2005:691). Most scholars, however, apply the term metaphorically or analogically, comparing certain kinds of music-making or musical products to vernacular speech.

In American music studies, this metaphorical approach has been traced by the folklorist Archie Green to the mid-1930s (1993). "Vernacular", he suggests, had a fresh and slightly ambiguous ring at this time, and therefore helped composers, musicologists, and folklorists working together in New Deal government programmes to reconcile a common interest in majoritarian America music culture. Three decades later, "vernacular" was employed to similarly propitious effect in H. Wiley Hitchcock's influential *Music in the United States—A Historical Introduction* (1969), within a broad framework for understanding American music history (see Introduction). Hitchcock gives a three-pronged definition of "vernacular tradition"-music, noting its general qualities ("native", "plebeian"), indicating it was approached in a way similar to informal speech ("not approached selfconsciously but simply grown into"), and pointing to its "utilitarian" or "entertainment" value (43-44). He also proposed that such music-making could be usefully distinguished from American "cultivated tradition"-music, suggesting that this cultural division was particularly evident during the nineteenth-century. Subsequent writers, though, have favoured the idea of "vernacular music" as a trans-historical category within which the folk and popular music of any era might be grouped (e.g., Small 1987; Burkholder et al. 2009). Commonly-cited examples of American "vernacular musics" include blackface minstrelsy, shape-note singing, town bands, jazz, blues, and country music.

In British folk music studies, meanwhile, the "vernacular" concept has been developed in rather different ways. One of the earliest usages was in *Folk Song in England*, where A.L. Lloyd describes the "home-made song of industrial workers" as "vernacular song"

(1975 [1967]:298). Because they coupled topical or local subject-matter with melodies plucked from existing sources, Lloyd regarded such songs as distinct from both traditional rural folksong and commercial popular music. Others have proposed that broadside balladry also inhabits the intermediate field of “vernacular culture” (Williams 1981). During the 1980s, wider usage of vernacularistic terms was encouraged by a sustained critique of the “folk music” category, which was seen to be compromised by nationalistic ideologies and to be theoretically ambiguous (see Porter 1993). Michael Pickering and Tony Green, in particular, championed “vernacular” as a more neutral and less prescriptive way to categorise the singing traditions of working-class and marginalised communities, which they dubbed “vernacular social groups” (1987a; cf. Pickering 1988). The concept of “vernacular song” seems to have been accepted in folk music studies in Canada for similar reasons (e.g., see Narváez 1995; Gregory 2006).

Yet another way of using “vernacular” has emerged in historical musicology. Extending a conceptual trope that regards music as a kind of language with its own “vocabulary” and “syntax”, some writers described the melodic/harmonic/rhythmic basis of popular forms of music-making as “musical vernaculars”—an approach perhaps stemming from the adoption of “vernacular” among 1930s American composers and critics. By the 1950s, the work of composers like Charles Ives was being described as utilising “the vernacular for the grammar of a new symphonic speech” (Cowell 1955:5). In Ives’ case, this related to musical ideas drawn from town band playing, congregational singing, and other music of his childhood, including the “accidents” that can characterise amateur playing (Rossiter 1976:41). Composers of historically-distant epochs have subsequently been perceived as utilising the “musical vernacular” of their times (e.g., Johnson 2002). Some scholars even suggest that an elemental diatonic “vernacular” underlies all Western music prior to the advent of serialism (Matthews 1989). In all these cases, “vernacular” serves as a metaphor, rather than the basis of a formal analytic method.

The concept of “vernacular”, then, has been utilised in the study of music from the 1920s onwards across several sub-disciplines. Entries in major reference works like the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Bohlman 2001), demonstrate a growing level of acceptance and legitimacy. Nonetheless, there has often been a lack of precision in how “vernacular” has been deployed. Sometimes, for instance, it seems to serve as a rather cosmetic replacement for the “folk” category, without being scrutinized

itself (e.g., see Gregory 2006:2; Gelbart 2007:158, 275). Indeed, aside from a short entry in the *New Grove*, little attempt seems to have been made to critically compare or reconcile the various ideas and applications which have emerged thus far.

The following sections explore more fully how “vernacular” might be applied to the study of music. Together, they attempt to reconcile the contributions and intuitions of earlier work within an overall synthesis. In order to clarify and elaborate the ideas, additional music literature along with work from different disciplines—some of which has already been a source of inspiration for musicologists—is also utilised. For reasons which will become clear, “vernacular” is primarily positioned as an interpretative tool of understanding rather than an ontological designation (cf. Williams 1981:59). Like all such tools, ‘vernacular” helps clarify something we perceive to be happening in music-making rather than serving as an essentialist cultural category.

The vernacular mode

Sociolinguists define “vernacular” in two main ways according to Nancy Niedzielski, the first equating it with spontaneous, casual speech; the second with nonstandard dialects (2005). These perspectives, while not mutually incompatible (the same ideas are fused in the *OED*’s “naturally spoken” and “dialect... of a particular country”), prompt a fundamental question: is vernacular connected more with the “casualness” of speech or the “localness” of what is spoken? Or, to put it another way, is vernacular a category of process or product? Similar questions arise with the application of “vernacular” to music. As we have seen, it has been variously used to categorise musical genres, products, processes, and communities—and sometimes combinations thereof in the same work (e.g., Pickering and Green 1987b). In such cases, is there a central meaning? Are all the secondary usages illuminating or necessary? We can begin to answer these basic questions by exploring the work of a writer who has tussled with them in the past.

Possibly the first writer in modern times to systematically apply concepts of vernacular beyond the field of language was cultural historian John Kouwenhoven. In *Made in America* (1948), he proposed the existence of a vigorous “vernacular tradition” in American culture arising from the pioneer experiences of European colonists and their

descendents. In the New World, people had escaped the cultural hierarchies and institutions of the Old World, and been free to innovate "vernacular forms" of architecture, machinery, and entertainment suited to their immediate needs, environment, and resources. Kouwenhoven acknowledged, though, that the "cultivated tradition" of self-conscious European precedent still exercised considerable power in America, especially in the older settlements of the East Coast. As will be obvious, these ideas greatly influenced H. Wiley Hitchcock's history of American music (see 1988:54 fn1).

Various issues arose, however, from Kouwenhoven's positioning of vernacular in reference to both "tradition" and "form". Could vernacular forms necessarily be identified in their own right? Where do the forms of cultivated precedent originate? Such questions highlight the same process/product split found in vernacular-language definitions. In a later interview, Kouwenhoven clarified his position, stating, "I don't think of objects as being vernacular. The vernacular is a mode of design… the discovery or improvisation of forms appropriate to a new material" (from Conniff 1986). He further suggested that forms emerging through the vernacular mode could eventually become the basis of cultivated tradition and, pursuing the logic further, decreed that individual artefacts might well emerge from the combined influence of vernacular and cultivated modes, each shaping the outcome in different ways. Similar insights have been made by other writers who, for example, suggest that a "vernacular layer" might be perceived in cultural artefacts like buildings, alongside institutional or academic "layers" (e.g., Howard 2008a:205; Glassie 2000:21).

These propositions also seriously undermine the notion that songs, tunes, and other musical products can be considered "vernacular" in themselves. While musical products may be chosen, combined, shaped, or inflected through the vernacular mode—and remain a primary source of evidence for research into its processes—a product-based definition of "vernacular" seems more problematic than not. Classifying songs as "vernacular songs" may well help identify types of material previously neglected by scholars, but it also reifies them as objects that can travel from context to context, all the while remaining "vernacular", thus imbuing them with a misleading sense of ontological purity (such as inspires confusing debates about whether particular songs are "folk songs"). Such a categorisation also obscures the role of other processes in

shaping such songs. While products of the vernacular mode are sometimes perceived as distinctive in their own right—on the significance of this see more below—existing emic terms or technical categories should be sufficient when describing them.

Like Kouwenhoven and various other writers, then, I believe it is preferable to regard "vernacular" as primarily a mode of activity. It must be further clarified, though, that vernacular denotes not so much any specific procedure or process, but rather the informal way—what sociolinguists would describe as "spontaneous", "casual …and least self-conscious", or where "minimum attention is paid" (Poplack 1993:252; Niedzielski 2005:415; Labov 1972:112)—in which it is approached. The same idea is encapsulated in H. Wiley Hitchcock's notion of vernacular music as "not approached selfconsciously" (1969:43). The vernacular mode, then, is this identifiable attitude, stance, or approach toward music-making.

Vernacular milieu and domain

H. Wiley Hitchcock, and John Kouwenhoven before him, regarded the vernacular mode in expansive historical terms, as a long-held "tradition" in American cultural history. Many other writers, however, have turned to the more quotidian workings of the vernacular mode, linking it with certain everyday frameworks of social interaction. They therefore extend our understanding of the "vernacular" concept in several different directions.

Michael Pickering and Tony Green, for instance, in introducing their edited collection, *Everyday Culture—Popular Song and the Vernacular Milieu* (Pickering and Green 1987a), firmly position the vernacular mode in local music-making contexts. First, they define the concept of "the vernacular milieu" as

> the local environment and specific immediate contexts within which, as an integral part of their everyday life, people participate in non-mediated forms and processes of cultural life. By definition, that cultural life is non-official, and while it is at times assimilated into the national culture, it is experientially felt and understood by its participants as quite distinct. (1987b:2 fn)

It is music-making at "focused gatherings" within the vernacular milieu, they explain, borrowing sociologist Erving Goffman's term for face-to-face socialising, where the vernacular mode is exercised (4). Subsequent book chapters present examples such as singing at pubs, family events, and amateur music clubs, which illustrate this in one way or another. For Pickering and Green, the community to which participants belong—which they define as both a social formation based upon a shared place/interest and as a symbolic construct that creates a sense of inclusion—is a crucial subtext:

> Vernacular culture constitutes a hotch-potch of resources for human usages and enjoyment, a mixed body of practices, expressions and artefacts.... It is not so much the origin or uniqueness of such content which is important... [but rather] how the heterogeneous assemblage of chosen material is brought together to give identity and definition to individuals and groupings within specific positions in the social structure, and within specific geographical and occupational locations.... It is the process of localization which is then under consideration: the process of 'making our own'. (12)

The vernacular mode, therefore, enables an ad hoc "customising" of the cultural resources at hand to suit the shared experience of community among participants. "Making our own", Pickering and Green suggest, is an active and ongoing process.

Local milieux and small communities have been regarded by many other scholars as the *locus classicus* of the vernacular mode, but some have ranged further afield. The anthropologist Margaret Lantis, for example, notes that "vernacular culture" encompasses the interactive culture of strangers in public places like train stations and the non-formalised elements of large events like agricultural fairs (1960). Similarly, discourse-analyst Gerard Hauser identifies sites of public debate like city street corners and radio talkback as places where "vernacular rhetoric" can flourish (1999). At the opposite end of the scale, folklorist Leonard Primiano argues that "vernacular religion" comprises the idiosyncratic mixtures of religious belief that people individually configure for themselves rather than in groups (1995).

Similarly, vernacular approaches to music-making can be found in analogous contexts. The spontaneous chanting that breaks out at street marches and sports matches, for example, shows the vernacular mode operating in a mass public context (e.g., see

Russell 1997:182). Furthermore, the kind of informal singing that people perform in the bathroom shower provides a musical—if rather less weighty—analogue for Primiano's theory of individuated "vernacular religion". Such examples, then, suggest that the field of interest extends far beyond the community-based milieux mapped by Pickering and Green. One might say, returning to the Latin roots of "vernacular", that this approach could be adopted *anywhere* that people feel sufficiently "at home". If this suggestion evokes an unmanageably vast array of possibilities, then it is only appropriate: after all, vernacular speech is pervasive in everyday life, not a rare or unusual phenomenon. In fact, these radically-inclusive implications help bring to our attention numerous forms of what can be called—to adapt an architectural expression coined by Bernard Rudofsky (1964)—"music without musicians", all kinds of music-making in which anybody can take part.

This expanded understanding also challenges Pickering and Green's further assertion that the vernacular mode is restricted to "vernacular social groups", i.e. "subordinate groups and classes" (1987b:2, 24). While this has a certain metaphorical logic—vernacular speech being often perceived as "vulgar" or "low"—it contradicts the common-sense intuition that all people have a capacity for informal speech. As sociolinguist William Labov argues, "most of the speakers of *any* social group have a vernacular style" in their speech repertoire (1972:112, italics added). For some musicologists, too, the metaphor of vernacular speech is valuable precisely because it reminds us "the ability to take part in a musical performance is as natural and universal... as... the ability to take part in a conversation" (Small 1987:7). Class-based categories like "vernacular social groups", then, like "vernacular songs", thus seem an unnecessary and misleading component of the scholarly apparatus.

Another way to characterise the many situations in which the vernacular mode operates is offered by Ivan Illich (1981, 1982). Illich was a trenchant critic of the dehumanising effect of modern Western institutions, promoting instead the autarky bestowed by subsistence activities like backyard vegetable gardening, home cooking, and self-constructed dwellings. Returning to the original Roman meanings of "vernacular" as homeborn and homemade, he characterised these activities as occurring in "the

vernacular domain" (1981:24-26, 57-58).[1] His choice of the word "domain" is particularly significant for emphasising the dominion people thereby assume, as opposed to their being dependent on systems of market exchange or state redistribution. Vernacular speech remains a fundamental example of this, because it consists of "words and patterns grown on the speaker's own ground" rather than inculcated through mass schooling (57). Some writers have sensed that vernacular approaches to music-making also break from a pattern of mass musical production/consumption (e.g., Pickering and Green 1987b:2-3; Johnson 2008). Indeed, Pickering and Green's key phrase, "making our own", encapsulates this spirit of humble self-sufficiency.

Illich also uses "vernacular domain" to designate specific "areas of subsistence" within the geographies of individual people's lives (1981:139). The central vernacular domain is the domestic household, while others might be accessed on a shared, temporary, or seasonal basis. Applying this concept to music, one might characterise the various sites of music-making discussed already—e.g., pubs and music clubs, household spaces, and public areas like streets—as vernacular domains governed by their own social parameters. Yet vernacular domains in music may be even more pervasive than we realise. The ephemerality of live music performance means that vernacular dominion may be seized spontaneously, as when eruptions of chanting by large crowds flourish in defiance of some required formality. Indeed, a vernacular approach may also involve taking liberties that are only marginally legal or perhaps even criminal (e.g., see Ó Cadhla 2001).

Resources and competencies

Two other concepts also enhance our understanding of the vernacular mode: resources and competencies. The first refers to the various "raw materials" that people access for making-our-own music. The second refers to the capabilities people draw upon to combine, perform, and transform these resources to suit their own situation and needs.

All music-making, of course, involves a utilisation of musical resources, but the vernacular mode imparts a distinctive quality to the process. It is frequently observed,

[1] For further background discussion of Illich's concept of "the vernacular domain", see Cayley 1992; Schroyer 2009:57-73.

for example, that making-our-own music tends to create heterogeneous mixtures, assortments or miscellanies of different material. Pickering and Green note the "hotch-potch of resources… brought together" in the vernacular milieu (1987b:12). Likewise, Debora Kodish describes Newfoundland singing events as "remodelling... a range of popular, elite, and folk traditions" and concludes that heterogeneity virtually defines the mode: "vernacular stresses mixture" (1983:132).

To better grasp this magpie-like appropriation, we can again turn to Illich's idea that vernacular domains are "areas of subsistence" (1981:139). Here, the taking or borrowing of materials is a discovery of the "utilization value of the environment" (3). Like beachcombers collecting pieces of flotsam found on the beach, people may treat musical resources as a kind of open "commons", a territory which can be foraged without permission or payment being needed. Songs and tunes are perhaps the most obvious kinds of musical resources that could be thus treated, but as Pickering and Green note, they include all available "practices, expressions and artefacts" (1987b:12). This could encompass musical instruments, sound-producing *objets trouvés*, body percussion, or anything else found usefully to hand.

The competencies of people engaged in making-our-own music are another important component of the vernacular mode. Returning to the metaphor of vernacular speech, we can understand these as capabilities "grown into" through regular social interaction and becoming second-nature. Jean Burgess coins the term "vernacular literacies" to describe the story-telling skills which most people acquire in this way, manifest in their ability to tell a joke, arrange photographs in a scrapbook, or write a postcard (2006). Similar musical competencies that people might acquire include the ability to raise one's voice in song, add an off-the-cuff descant, clap or whistle, or create rhymes for an impromptu parody. Everybody, the vernacular-speech metaphor implies, has some kind of musical fluency that is released once they feel sufficiently "at home", regardless of whether this meets normative standards of musicianship. Charles Ives describes just this kind of musical fluency when recalling the camp-meeting religious gatherings of his American childhood:

> Once when Father was asked: 'How can you stand it to hear old John Bell... bellow off-key the way he does at camp-meetings?' his answer was: 'Old John is a

> supreme musician. Look into his face and hear the music of the ages. Don't pay too much attention to the sounds. If you do, you may miss the music. You won't get a heroic ride to Heaven on pretty little sounds!' (quoted in Cowell 1955:24)

The particular blend of musical competencies that people can deploy in the vernacular domain will also be *sui generis* for each individual—like the idiolectic aspects of vernacular speech. Some individuals may have special competencies that set them apart and perhaps afford them a greater role. As Debora Kodish observes, the "mixture" arising from a vernacular approach in the context of a particular singing tradition includes "the variety of its possible realizations by performers of different genders, ages, and classes" (1983:132).

The vernacular mode in performance

From this point in the discussion, for the sake of convenience, the elements of vernacular mode, milieu, domain, resources, and competencies, as broadly outlined above, will be collectively termed "the vernacular". In next assessing the customising potential of the vernacular—the process by which resources are brought together and transformed—we can first consider this in the context of musical performance.

The distinctive character of the vernacular mode is often most vividly evoked by people's own descriptions of their making-our-own music. Emic descriptions of this kind include: "mucking around", "playing it by ear", "throwing it together", "grooving", "making it up as we go along", "adding our bit", and—of course—"making our own". These all convey a sense of mutability, of playfulness, of the same unpredictability which is also identified as a hallmark of vernacular speech. As Dante Alighieri noted "our native tongue… being home-made, changes at pleasure" (1887:22), change that is often ephemeral, occurring as language is uttered, inflected, ordered, picked up, adapted, and perhaps invented in the course of informal conversation.

To help understand analogous change in musical performance we can turn to Charles Keil's concept of "participatory discrepancies" (Keil and Feld 1994:96-108). When people participate in music-making, he argues, they tend to create small instances of "out-of-timeness" and "out-of-tuneness". Such discrepancies are unplanned, half-

submerged in the flux of experience, occurring because "participation" itself is a primitive mode of consciousness (claimed by philosopher Owen Barfield to be "pre-logical": quoted in Keil and Feld 1994:97). When discrepancies are an accepted element in music-making, they render the performance "open, imperfect, and subject to redefinition by every emergent self" (171). They invite participatory investment in the performance. The organic interplay of players in a jazz rhythm-section and the feeling-our-way-into-the-groove shufflings of people on a dance floor are among the examples Keil cites.

The vernacular mode would seem to implicitly support such participatory discrepancies and, possibly, could be extended beyond the "groove"-orientated examples Keil favours to include a broader range of accidents and fumbles that can accompany "mucking around", "music without musicians", and amateur playing (such as inspired Charles Ives). Allan Thomas identifies similar qualities that may attend impromptu group singing at community occasions:

> It grows and 'catches on', there is no single moment when everyone starts, there is no conductor. This way the voices find their own part, and are free to sing in unison, or to add descant or other part. The rhythm or metrical structure too is interesting – suspending from the regular metre to something which is irregular, unpredictable, yet organic – growing from the situation. (1989:100)

In her ethnography of pub-singing in Suffolk, England, Ginette Dunn also describes a range of spontaneous incidents that occurred at the sessions she observed: singers localising names to raise a laugh, attendees interjecting, or people hushing up bawdy verses when strangers are present (1980).

While participatory discrepancies are, by definition, "discrepant", Keil also emphasises that their power to engage participants still depends upon collective expectations of synchrony. They support perceptions of unfolding musical structures—in terms of rhythm, meter, melody, etc.—rather than negating them. Discrepancies both assert individuality and reach toward a group synchrony. A similar tension can be seen between the expressive and communicative functions of vernacular speech: the expectation that individuals, while speaking for themselves, work toward the goal of mutual understanding.

These ideas also cast light on another interesting feature of the pub-singing described by Ginette Dunn: a “chairman”, informally appointed by pub-goers, who was empowered to call for “lovely order” when he decided the session was becoming too rowdy, for instance (1980:48, 91). Here we see how vernacular dominion may be limited within communities to meet collective social expectations. As Erving Goffman notes of “focused gatherings”: they “provide the communicative base for a circular flow of feeling among the participants as well as corrective compensations for deviant acts” (quoted in Pickering and Green 1987b:4). What is especially interesting about the pub “chairman” role, though, which was probably appropriated from professional music hall, is that this too can be regarded as making-our-own product of the vernacular. One could say that the vernacular, then, returning to its original Latin meanings, endows people with the dominion to make their own “home rules” around musical performance. Although such conventions may carry considerable weight, they can be changed, suspended, or discarded by participants—as when the pub “chairman” forgets his role—in ways not possible with rules born of larger social and cultural institutions. (On the influence of external institutions or cultural values on vernacular domains, see below.)

Vernacularisation

In describing the processes attending the vernacular mode in music-making, writers have often emphasised their essentially transformative nature: that people are in some way combining or adapting existing resources, rather than creating them *ex nihilo*. Scholars in other disciplines have characterised these transformations in various ways, including as “syncretism”, “pastiche”, and “hybridity” (e.g., see Ono and Sloop 1995; Howard 2008a). The term “vernacularisation”, however, used by some writers (e.g., see Pollock 1998), helps identify these processes more distinctly.

Certain examples of musical vernacularisation have been mentioned already, like the use of *objets trouvés* for improvised sound-making; others might include the assemblage of private song scrapbooks (e.g., Kodish 1983:133-134). An area of particular interest in folk music studies is the creation of so-called “vernacular songs”. As A.L. Lloyd characterises them, these set local or topical lyrics to tunes borrowed from popular or traditional songs (1975 [1967]). Other scholars have also defined

"vernacular song" as a way to draw attention to such makeshift productions, including local ballads (e.g., Narváez 1995) and topical broadsides (e.g., Gammon 2008).

Theoretical analyses of such vernacularised productions are often based on perceptions that they mix together appropriated and local material. Some writers, with the demotic connotations of vernacular speech in mind, have regarded this as a process of subaltern resistance by subordinated communities, a making-our-own of materials procured from the dominant culture (e.g., Ono and Sloop 1995). Similarly, Russell Potter characterises the lyric styles of African-American rap as "resistance vernaculars" because they reconfigure the dominant language of English to empowering effect (Potter 1995; cf. Baker Jr. 1984). Robert Howard, however, notes the irony implicit in this process: "the vernacular gains an alternate authority by participating in its own subordination" (Howard 2008b:497). Even relatively-privileged communities, he suggests, may conjure up an "institution" to resist or rebel against. Howard thus views the products of vernacularisation as always retaining the imprint of some dialectical power negotiation, with a *verna*—a mixture of foreign-slave/Roman-citizen—providing the archetypal instance.

Another kind of analysis focuses on the "unexpected transformation" or "unique form" produced by vernacularisation (Bhabha 1996:202; Ono and Sloop 1995:23). Such perceptions occurred even in Roman times. The orator Marcus Tullius Cicero, for example, described a debate in which the "indescribable vernacular flavour" of a debater's speech enabled them to triumph over a better-trained opponent (1971:147). What is this masterful "indescribable flavour"? For Robert Howard, it symbolises the half-tamed wildness of the *vernae*, that being homeborn gave these slaves an unusual authority that their masters could not readily subdue (2008b:496). An older frame of reference may be the mastery of homemade products, which are only "indescribable" relative to the discourses and values of institutionalised production. Within the vernacular domain, too, such mastery may be acknowledged in terms of a sense of agreed worth that people do not need to articulate further: it remains "indescribable" for them, too. In fact, people may be inclined *not* to explain what makes something good but, as Charles Keil suggests of participatory discrepancies, instead keep this "fully mysterious" (Keil and Feld 1994:104). The underlying meaning of music-making that

people treat as "mucking around", then, may not be easily discerned by observers or researchers.

Conceptual binaries

In the preceding discussion, scholarly work has been mentioned in passing where the concept of "vernacular" is twinned with another basic category: H. Wiley Hitchcock's vernacular/cultivated distinction is one such example; the dialectical vernacular/institutional relationship theorised by Robert Howard is another. In light of the premise they establish for research into the vernacular in music, these kinds of conceptual binaries need to be understood and critically assessed.

Many scholars have contrasted "vernacular" with an opposing concept. These opposites have included "cultivated" (Kouwenhoven 1948), "hegemonic" (Ono and Sloop 1995), "academic" (Glassie 2000), "institutional" (Howard 2008a), and "cosmopolitan" (Bauman 2008). Similarly, vernacular speech has been contrasted with various other language types, including "official", "standard", "global varieties", *lingua franca*, and "taught mother-tongue" (Illich 1981:29-51; Tabouret-Keller et al. 1997; Niedzielski 2005). Across this diverse array of opposing concepts, the binary conceptual structure remains the same. Some scholars have thus taken a further step and declared that "vernacular" is a dialectical concept only comprehensible in combination with an antithesis (e.g., Bauman 2008). One writer suggests that "vernacular" may eventually be rendered conceptually obsolete, presumably through some future synthesis (Glassie 2000:21).

Such binary conceptualisations have a linguistic precedent: their original inspiration seems to be the medieval distinction between Latin, the stable written language of church and scholarship, and changeable European vernaculars. Yet construing "vernacular" in this way creates certain issues. There is a risk that the binary structure becomes tautologous, for instance, the first category being defined as what the second is not and vice versa.[2] It also yokes vernacular into a broad theoretical framework that may only be appropriate for certain kinds of studies (like Hitchcock's historical

[2] For instance, Matthew Gelbart has suggested that folk music" and "art music" became tautological binary concepts in the nineteenth century (2007:7).

analysis). Another basic problem is selecting what "vernacular" should be paired with, considering the array of possibilities as listed above. Indeed, such diversity implies that no clear candidate actually exists.[3]

How can we account for this recurring (although not universal) tendency to position "vernacular" within a conceptual binary? The folklorist Charles Briggs sees it as arising from a tendency in Western intellectual thought to replicate "social and epistemological hierarchies" based upon class and ethnic differences. When "vernacular is defined in opposition to something else", he argues, this "[reproduces] dichotomies that have sustained the opposition between modernity and traditionality for three centuries" (2008:101). Cultural categories like "vernacular" thereby inevitably inherit connotations that reflect an elite Western standpoint: lowliness, backwardness, "Otherness". The musicologist Richard Crawford makes a similar observation about Hitchcock's vernacular/cultivated framework, noting that although it may "allow a classification of works that does not proclaim the superiority of one class over another... *such classifying is itself a cultivated act*" (2001:xii, italics added). Only from an cultivated perspective, after all, can it be decided what is "cultivated" and what is not.

One way to extract "vernacular" from these conceptual binaries and simultaneously explain their emergence and persistence, is to restore a sense of its ancient meanings. *Vernaculus* (and probably *verna*, too) originally denoted the homeborn and homemade, the outcome of a subsistence way of life, one that preceded more advanced systems of production and distribution. Once these systems arrived in Western culture, however, the vernacular domain became subject to subordinating dialectics generated by the hieratic ideologies of state, market, science, and culture. Its products stuck out in various ways—as unofficial, common, folksy, amateur, lowly—especially to those with special training in and allegiance to hieratic culture, even becoming "indescribable" to elite commentators like Marcus Cicero (see above). The vernacular did not "oppose" the other modes *per se*, it simply preceded them, with various binary constructions and secondary characterisations arising later. Some writers indicate that the vernacular still occupies this kind of "epistemological vacuum" in contemporary scholarship (Ó Cadhla

[3] It can also be noted that some scholars have complicated binary conceptualisations of "vernacular" with the belated admission of a third category to account for otherwise-unclassifiable material (e.g., see Hitchcock 1969:44 fn1).

2001:77), its products remaining *parerga*: leftover or marginal topics in particular disciplines (Batchen 2000:262). It should be emphasised, though, that the vernacular is not synonymous with archaic survivals or vanishing traditions. Children still "grow into" their own vernacular speech, even if they are in time also schooled to speak "correctly" according to some or other language ideology.[4] On an individual level, then, the broader historical subordination of the vernacular in Western culture keeps repeating itself.

The theoretical repositioning of "vernacular" outlined above has several implications for music research. First, it unlocks the concept from a dialectical framework, allowing the vernacular mode to be perceived simply as one processual strand at work in music-making, which consequently can be seen as the site of intersecting ideologies and values. Such an intersection might be seen, for example, in a jazz performance, where a regard for technical virtuosity, a respect for tradition, and an upholding of professional standards, delineate a vernacular domain of improvisation. Many other processes in music—e.g., revivalism, commercialism, standardisation, etc.—might also become layered with the vernacular in case-specific ways.

This framework also offers ways to explain why the vernacular mode manifests unevenly across different performance formats, communities, and genres. In concert-hall art music, for example, the vernacular may barely emerge because the music is strongly orientated to other values (Small 1987). The sharp separation of performers and audience, and strict behavioural norms for both groups, offer few opportunities for anybody to assume the relaxed liberties of the vernacular mode. Indeed, as suggested already, even informal music traditions may develop their own "rules" to contain the vernacular's subversive potential. Lastly, by dispensing with binaries like vernacular/cultivated, the very classification of genres as "vernacular musics" becomes unnecessary. Given the improbability of the vernacular mode operating exclusively in a given musical situation, such a classification smacks of ontological essentialism, the disadvantages of which have already been noted in regard to defining "vernacular" in terms of musical products or communities.

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[4] Research suggests that the unsupervised musical play of young children is just as full of improvisation and ephemeral change as vernacular speech (Kartomi 1991).

Products and extensions

Many of the transformations and performance gestures which arise from a vernacular approach to music-making will be momentary and ephemeral. Yet certain products—for example, a song parody or even just a humorous word-change in a lyric—may outlive their first appearance. They may become "our own" in a prolonged way, adhering to a musical tradition or the social networks of the vernacular milieu. How can the persistence of such products be theorised in relation to the vernacular (without having to conceive of them as purely "vernacular")?

To begin to answer this question we must reaffirm our understanding of the vernacular speech metaphor. After studying the everyday chatter of the streets and households of Ancient Rome, the grammarian Marcus Terentius Varro concluded that "the vernacular is always in motion" (quoted in Chambers 2003:248).[5] Such language, Varro infers, not only constantly changes, but that such change has an *impermanent* quality. In everyday speech, language is manipulated to suit our needs in evanescent, ephemeral, and reversible ways. Although we may create unexpected combinations or transformations, we do not necessarily set out to coin new expressions or expect them to spread widely (although obviously this sometimes occurs). Likewise, the vernacular in music-making can be identified with the informal approach taken, rather than the *permanence* of products that may emerge. As A.L. Lloyd remarks, the "vernacular songs" of Victorian industrial workers were only "*incidentally* passed on" (1975 [1967]:298, italics added).

What happens, though, when a parody becomes a popular favourite at pub singalongs or an item acquires a reputation as a "local song"? In such cases, we stand on the threshold of other processes operative in the music-making, as a product of the vernacular domain achieves community recognition as being specially "our own", a marker of shared identity. In time, it may be canonised, as representing a proud achievement, or "traditionalized" as a valued continuity with the community's past (Hymes 1975; Ben-Amos 1984:116). The vernacular may thus become a source of musical products or changes of lasting significance.

[5] In this quotation, "vernacular" is the translator's choice for *loquendi*, which more literally means "speech" or "talk" (see Varro 1938:vol.2, 452).

David Atkinson offers another perspective on the persistence of musical products of the vernacular (2004). According to Atkinson, products generated or transmitted informally, like folk songs, broadsides, local ballads, or parodies, may retain or acquire "vernacular textuality". Unlike, say, commercial, literary, or academic productions, such material carries a sense of indefinite ownership and is thus more "available" for ongoing casual usage. "Vernacular textuality" also encourages ongoing change, generating a "centrifugal" profusion of variants over time due to the involuntary effects of oral or ephemeral-print transmission, or deliberate adaption or amendment (471-475).

Products of the vernacular domain may conceivably spread far beyond their point of origin or transformation. "Elements can escape from the vernacular and become part of the mass culture", Margaret Lantis suggests (1960:204). This might occur when songs, tunes, musical techniques, or entire musical genres are co-opted into commercial popular music (Small 1987). The vernacular thus has the capacity to generate cultural forms that gain wide exposure and achieve pan-societal or even global resonance. Recordings and publications, moreover, then become a channel by which such material might enter the "commons" of other vernacular milieux.

It is also likely, as Christopher Small puts forward, that popular music scenes themselves, involving as they do self-taught musicianship, "mucking around" in practice rooms, and informal sharing of ideas, will become sites of vernacular change (1987:381-383). The nature of popular music, however, will also bring into play other values and processes which confine vernacular liberties (a possibility signalled in the previous section), such as the need to conform to copyright law, meet professional recording standards, and satisfy the expectations of paying audiences. Being associated with a named genre—categories needed partly to provide reliable consumer guidance—may also impose certain constraints.

Products of the vernacular may even be promoted in reified and commodified form as being "vernacular" (or some synonymous term). Ivan Illich observes, for example, that it is possible to construct a "taught counterfeit of the vernacular" in language (1981:69). Supporting and legitimising such counterfeits are dictionaries and grammars, devices that help freeze that which was once "always in motion". Such a "vernacular" no longer embodies the self-shaping agency of untaught speech. Illich also notes that many of the

qualities used to define vernacular speech, like “local” or “regional”, may then be applied equally correctly to schooled counterfeits—thus rendering these unsatisfactory as distinguishing criteria for genuine vernacular language.

Musicologists have observed that similar processes help “vernacular musics” achieve legitimacy in higher music education. Austin Caswell and Christopher Smith, for instance, note that American town band music and jazz have only become “acceptable pedagogical topics” in academic conservatories through a programme of sustained reification (2000:89). The processual openness of the vernacular mode, the latitude allowed for accidents and unexpected change, is ironed away as the music is redefined using set blueprints (notated scores) and codified standards of achievement. Once the music-making is ideologically reframed as a purely aesthetic product, the original context—with its perhaps unwanted associations—can be ignored and eventually forgotten. Even sophisticated renderings of the vernacular, like the compositions of Charles Ives, ultimately exist as reifications intended for the concert hall.

Reification, in fact, may be the only means by which we ever gain a sense of “vernaculars”—linguistic or otherwise—as discrete objects of study. Scholars have sometimes grouped disparate products of the vernacular together as pan-cultural study objects, using labels like “American vernacular architecture” (Upton and Vlach 1986) and “English vernacular song” (Gammon 2008). Such generalising procedures have value in defining fields of scholarly interest and drawing our attention to wider cultural patterns. Yet the underlying implication that the vernacular exists as a definite cultural entity is misleading. As one linguist says, “it might often be preferable if we spoke of ‘vernacular behaviour’ rather than of ‘vernacular languages’” (Le Page 1997:6). In whatever field of activity, the vernacular is manifest as an infinitely fine-grained reality that is “always in motion”.

Summary

This chapter has investigated how the concept of “vernacular” can be applied to the study of music. The discussion has shown that “vernacular” can be interpreted and theorised in various ways, but it has suggested that many of these can be combined into an overall synthesis. This final section summarises the conceptual framework that will

be used in this thesis (highlighting some key vernacularistic terms in italics), notes some issues of nomenclature and methodology that have emerged, and concludes by restating the significance of the vernacular.

"Vernacular", it has been argued, can be most usefully conceptualised as an approach toward music-making that is defined by a sense of relaxed, taken-for-granted ease comparable with that of vernacular speech. The *vernacular mode* may be assumed wherever people feel sufficiently "at home": at face-to-face focused gatherings, large crowds, or just by themselves. Within these *vernacular domains* people assume the liberty to perform and transform music to suit their needs, drawing upon resources as if from a musical commons and deploying their own "grown into" competencies. They thereby engage in a kind of making-our-own subsistence activity available to everybody. *The vernacular* in a particular musical context refers to this combination of mode, domain, resources, and competencies.

People effect various kinds of musical change though feeling "at home". Participatory discrepancies and other spontaneous, ephemeral alterations may occur during performance. They may *vernacularise* appropriated resources: adapting and parodying songs, creating instrumental accompaniments, or fashioning various extra-musical accoutrements. Such processes can be interpreted as a "bottom up" assertion of agency or desire to create a distinctive sense of collective identity. Products of the vernacular domain may also be seen as having their own "indescribable" but masterful flavour. People may retain them as having some lasting value. Certain products may also acquire *vernacular textuality*—a sense of indefinite ownership that encourages their spread and modification—and some may pass into a wider cultural arena.

In a given musical context, the vernacular mode will probably always exist in a dynamic interaction with other cultural values, modes, and processes. These may channel the vernacular into certain areas or restrict it. Such processes will inevitably come into play, too, when products of the vernacular domain are extended into popular music or art music, even when they are promoted or represented as "vernacular".

The chapter has also highlighted certain issues associated with how the vernacular has been previously theorised. In particular, once it is defined in processual terms, concepts

like “vernacular songs”, “vernacular social groups”, and “vernacular musics” come to seem unnecessary and misleading. They are also ethically problematic. Musical products, practitioners, and traditions are all vulnerable to a kind of essentialisation brought about by scholarly classification (see Abrahams 1993:388-393). Declining to categorise these things as “vernacular”, then, can be recommended as an “attempt to prohibit our tools of classification from becoming so powerful that our [work] ...creates objectified communities” (Ono and Sloop 1995:26). With such musical communities, as with musical products, traditions, and practices, we can instead be guided by their existing emic names.

Furthermore, the chapter has hinted that the informal, processual nature of the vernacular may create methodological challenges for research. A sense of underlying values or a guiding ideology may not be explicitly articulated in making-our-own music, leaving it open to misinterpretation, neglect, or derision. According to hieratic or modern standards of value, products of the vernacular may be seen as lowly or vulgar. Scholars, too, may place undue importance on qualities of mixture, makeshiftness, or incoherence. Although these may be accurate perceptions of something that is “always in motion”, it is imperative for musicologists to determine the positive corollaries of the vernacular’s latitude for evanescent variation.

The chapter has identified various ways in which “vernacular” is valuable as a conceptual tool in music studies. It draws our attention to music-making *parerga* that tend to be excluded from categories like folk, popular, art, or traditional, including forms of “music without musicians”. It also contains its own theory of change: that by taking an informal approach to music-making, people create myriad ephemeral, accidental, and reversible alterations to existing resources. It indicates, too, that while most of these changes will be impermanent, some may result in musical products or features of lasting significance for practitioners, a musical community, or wider culture.

Lastly, the chapter has also suggested that the deepest significance of the vernacular domain lies in the humble empowerment it confers. Everybody, it implies, has access to homemade domains to music-making. Here they can assume the liberty to choose materials at hand and directly shape performances, repertoires, products, and styles to suit. Such musical autarky may become a basic tenet of survival for hard-pressed

peoples—as Christopher Small argues it has for African-American slaves and their descendents (1987). Once the vernacular in music begins to be understood in these ways—being as universal, malleable, and vital as vernacular speech—music-making itself no longer seems scarce, confined to identified "musicians" or "musics", but rather as something immanent, all set, and on the tip of the tongue.

Chapter 2

Locating the vernacular in New Zealand music

The concept of vernacular, although widely employed in musicology internationally, has rarely been cited in studies of New Zealand music. These citations, moreover, are usually cursory with little accompanying explanation of the concept's meaning, of how the vernacular might be located, the general scope of possible topics, or the most applicable research methods (e.g., see Shieff 1994:138-139). To apply vernacular more directly to New Zealand music, then, as this thesis sets out to do for the first time, thus demands some further preparatory discussion.

This chapter considers how we can locate the vernacular in New Zealand music. It begins by outlining a practical agenda for research: a provisional "musicology of the vernacular". This is followed by a review of New Zealand music literature in which identifiable instances of the vernacular have been discussed or revealed, so as to get a better sense of the range of possible topics and review other musicological approaches. The chapter concludes with a general description of the methods used in the ethnographies to follow.

Toward a musicology of the vernacular

The previous chapter presented a conceptual framework for vernacular that synthesised ideas from music studies and other disciplines. Vernacular was defined primarily as a mode of music-making analogous with the informality of vernacular speech: informal, taken-for-granted, least-attention-paid. This approach is taken in specific vernacular domains (e.g., places, occasions) where people use their "grown into" musical competencies to transform available resources to suit their needs. "The vernacular" in a particular music-making context refers to the combination of mode, domain, resources, and competencies. On a deeper level, the vernacular embodies the making-our-own empowerment of the homemade. From this general basis, we can develop a working approach: a provisional "musicology of the vernacular".

The vernacular concept has appeared in various types of music study, as we have seen, including historiography, ethnographic case studies, and critical essays. In the New Zealand music context, where vernacular has seldom been used before, case study research is the most appropriate form of foundational work. Only through studying the vernacular at work in specific cases can comparisons be made and general propositions advanced.

The first task in such case study research is selecting appropriate topics. While the vernacular can be viewed as a potential in every form of music-making, it will be most evident where there is a manifestly high degree of informality and participatory inclusiveness: domestic, social, community, and crowd music-making, for example, or live popular music. Giveaway traits—including repertoire hodgepodges, adapted songs, and participatory discrepancies—will also guide suitable topic choices. Descriptions by the practitioners (e.g, "it's just mucking around") may provide a kind of emic confirmation of the vernacular's presence, too. Ultimately, researchers will need to proceed on the basis of their own intuitions after conducting preliminary research.

Various contextual questions about the chosen music-making topic must then be asked to help understand the vernacular in the specific case, for example: What is the milieu or community involved? Where and when does the music-making occur? What functions does it serve? What resources and competencies do people bring to the music-making? What factors allow people to feel "at home" and thereby access the vernacular mode? Only by grasping this context can we understand the vernacular in music-making of particular times and places.

The vernacular might be located in various areas of music-making. The key vernacular domain will be performance events. Whether at a singsong, concert, or dance, it is in the act of performing that people will be most profusely and palpably changing musical resources through an informal approach. Here, research might investigate the melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic qualities of performance, repertoire choices and impromptu lyric changes, use of instruments, body movement, how different musical roles are configured, and the shaping of the overall event. Such aspects could be charted via direct observation, from recordings or written descriptions, or through interviews with practitioners. Collecting and comparison of musical products (like songs), will also

bring processes of vernacularisation into focus. Extra-musical activities—like the making of instruments or song books—might also be of interest.

A key objective in studying the vernacular is ascertaining the value this approach has for the people involved. What is at stake in the music-making and what role does the vernacular play? How does it empower people? In answering these questions, we can ask practitioners themselves and also look to the subtexts of the music-making. The vernacular creates special challenges, though, because it may be taken for granted by practitioners and left unarticulated. On the subject of participatory discrepancies, Charles Keil notes that when seeking people's understanding of these features, we need to observe what is left unarticulated and "fully mysterious" (Keil and Feld 1994:104). A similar sensitivity is needed in studying the vernacular. For interpretative clues, we might need to turn to "native" terms, discourses, and visual representations. It should also be expected that the vernacular may be interwoven with other processes, ideologies and values, which might also need to be assayed by research.

The vernacular's value may also be found in musical products retained by communities for serving as markers of shared identity, for example, or for their special functionality. Research will therefore need to consider the music-making diachronically, as well as synchronically, in terms of specific performances. A historical perspective may also reveal vernacular domains changing over time, appearing or disappearing even. Furthermore, it may be possible to trace products of the vernacular outward from a milieu through mediations and incorporation into different musical arenas. Lastly, any critical reception of the music-making in public discourses—including music scholarship—will help understand how the vernacular has been understood within the broader cultural order of a society.

Once sufficient material has been gathered, an overall description and analysis of the music-making can be made, providing a distinct "image of the vernacular". Such studies can then be used for wider comparative purposes and contribute to related scholarly debates. Ultimately, though, they have inherent value in demonstrating the empowering potential of the vernacular for the people concerned. A musicology of the vernacular works "from the inside out, from the place where people have the power to govern their own lives to the spaces in which their powers evaporate" (Glassie 1995:401).

New Zealand music studies and the vernacular

Given the wide applicability of the vernacular concept, it is inevitable that many relevant types of music-making have already been covered in New Zealand music studies. Indeed, one can perceive a latent impulse—a "search for the vernacular"—in some strands of previous work, like the collecting of New Zealand folk music. Reviewing such literature, therefore, has a double purpose: first, it allows relevant topics to be surveyed; and second, it enables the strengths and weaknesses of other approaches to be gauged.

First, however, it is necessary to clarify our basic understanding of what is covered by "New Zealand music studies". There are various ways of defining this field of study, largely dependent on what the term "New Zealand music" is taken to mean. Some literature implies that "New Zealand music" refers to New Zealand music compositions and excludes musical performance (e.g., Lodge 1991). Generally, though, the term is used to refer to the totality of musical culture of New Zealand. Surveys of New Zealand music studies literature thus tend to cover research relating to any kind of music-making, performance tradition, or composition in New Zealand or involving New Zealanders (e.g., Simpson 1997-1998; Jane 2002). Throughout this thesis, "New Zealand music" is used in this broad and inclusive sense.

New Zealand music studies is an interdisciplinary field encompassing work in historical musicology, ethnomusicology, folk music, popular music, and Māori music studies, along with relevant research in other disciplines. Its genesis may perhaps be found with works like George Grey's collection of Māori chant and song texts, *Ko nga moteatea* (1851), published shortly after the nation's founding in 1840, with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between Māori leaders and the British Crown. Since these times, an extensive body of literature of both a scholarly and populist nature has accumulated, as attested to in various bibliographical works (e.g., Harvey 1985; Harding 1992; McLean 1995). The following subsections review relevant literature, grouped for convenience by topic or sub-discipline. Most deal with the musical culture of Pākehā New Zealanders (those of mainly European descent) with Māori music studies being covered by a final section. Any use of vernacularistic terms (e.g., "resistance vernacular") will also be noted.

General historiography and art music

Vernacular has been used in some general histories of music, as we have seen, to group together similar genres and delineate pan-cultural trends, the most obvious case being H. Wiley Hitchcock's *Music in the United States* (1969). This work provides a useful precedent for New Zealand music studies, too, given that Hitchcock links the growth of vernacular traditions in American music to nineteenth-century frontier experience. Such a "frontier" situation is echoed in the settlement of New Zealand, a remote archipelago in the South pacific, both by the Polynesian ancestors of the Māori people and British colonists.

The sole general history of New Zealand music, John Thomson's *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music* (1991), is perhaps the only work where such a proposition could be presented. Although Thomson includes Hitchcock's study in his bibliography, he does not borrow his vernacular/cultivated structure. Nonetheless, various hints of a vernacular approach are apparent in the book's descriptions of the musical culture of early British settlements, including mention of the "uproarious carousal" of music in Wellington's primitive taverns of the 1840s, and the ad hoc entertainments of more respectable concerts (20). Local and topical song-writing are described in a discussion of folk music, too (65-71).

Rather than tracing any "vernacular tradition" through into later music-making, though, Thomson constructs his overall narrative around the growth of "a performing tradition"—defined in terms of classical music societies, orchestras, and performers—and "a composing tradition" in art music. Moreover, although he covers aspects of local brass band and choral society history, there is no discussion of how these practices might have evolved differently in New Zealand from their British counterparts. Certain longstanding traditions, too, like pipe bands, as well as the entire gamut of post-1945 popular music, are completely overlooked. Thomson's narrative climaxes in the mid-twentieth century, when art music composers and performers begin to achieve consistent international recognition.

Some sense of "a search for the vernacular" does surface, however, in Thomson's later chapters. Introducing a section on art music composition, for example, he draws upon

the perceptions of Douglas Lilburn (1915-2001) that Pākehā composers like himself were both "deprived of a valid folk-song tradition, [and] unlikely to find fruitful stimulus in living Māori music" (Thomson 1991:212). It is the *absence* of the vernacular, therefore, which is most keenly sensed, with the history of New Zealand art music framed as a tradition autonomously constructed by composers themselves.

Lilburn's conclusions were first voiced in two lectures, *A Search for Tradition* (1984), originally delivered in 1946, and *A Search for a Language* (1985), delivered in 1969, which have influenced much subsequent writing about New Zealand art composition. Significantly, Lilburn later reframed this "search" in vernacularistic terms. In a private letter discussing his musical settings of Denis Glover's poem, *Sings Harry*, he recalled pondering how to match its colloquial language with "the harmonies and rhythms of a 'vernacular' style still unformed in our music" (quoted in Shieff 1994:138).

Lilburn's assessment that there was no formed "vernacular style" in New Zealand music was arguably inherited from the folk music concepts of his teacher, English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. Therefore, according to Sarah Shieff, when composing works likes *Sings Harry*, Lilburn

> ignored the existing local musical traditions which did not fit his parameters for a musical vernacular…. This meant the exclusion of popular and domestic music, and the music of brass band and church choir. Indigenous music was also excluded.... Ironically, Lilburn's "vernacular" was to be established via British high-cultural models. (Shieff 1994:138-139)

Beyond this, we can only say with certainty that while some New Zealand art compositions—including pieces by Lilburn himself[1]—seem to use the vernacular as a compositional resource, this is rarely discussed in critical discourse. Some writers, however, have perceived that the country's geographical remoteness has sometime impelled composers *themselves* to adopt a "do it yourself" (DIY) mindset—e.g., building their own equipment—that could be considered as synonymous with a vernacular approach (Clifford 2011).

[1] For example, on the influence of the Scottish songs sung by Lilburn's parents, see Hoskins 1995-1996.

Popular music

While the vernacular concept has not been extensively applied in popular music studies internationally, writers like Christopher Small have seen popular music as an important site of vernacular processes (1987). Hints of such an influence are found throughout New Zealand studies dealing with colonial and contemporary popular music.

Nineteenth-century popular music in New Zealand encompassed the thriving worlds of professional minstrel shows, musical theatre, and vaudeville. Various studies suggest that such “makeshift companies… spawned in the pubs” were often required to take a vernacular approach (Downes 1975:7). Touring opera companies, for instance, unlike their present day incarnations, were apparently given to adding vaudeville skits to programmes and splitting-up performances to accommodate local events (Simpson 1993).

The goldfield entertainments of the mid-nineteenth century, especially those associated with Charles Thatcher, more directly evidence a vernacular tailoring of popular music to a particular time and place. Robert Hoskins has described how Thatcher wrote hundreds of “locals”—topical songs using borrowed tunes that humorously reported on daily events—and performed them at lively concerts (e.g., 1977). Hoskins has also researched another interesting sideline of entertainers like Thatcher: the publication of ephemeral songsters containing the words of “locals” (1987).

While such literature has revealed vernacular aspects of colonial popular entertainment, significant features have also been obscured by a historiographical emphasis upon individual performers and companies. Studies sometimes note colonial audiences being prone to making their own fun during concerts, for instance, conversing, interjecting, stamping along in time to music (e.g., Downes 1975:86-87; Murray 2008:47), yet such behaviours are little discussed. Indeed, where writers have sought to chart the rising professionalism of the local industry, they have seemed to regard such conduct disapprovingly, as something that rightfully needed to be “tamed” in the name of cultural progress (e.g., see Downes 1975:86-87, 158-159).

Research into twentieth-century popular music also hints at the presence of the vernacular. Studies of Hawai'ian music in 1950s Auckland and the youth-club scene of 1960s Wellington, for example, hint at various crossovers between casual music-making and the music industry (Sampson 1998; Watkins 1989). Similar scenarios can be found in a history of New Zealand rock music (Dix 1988), while a recent work by Chris Bourke on 1918-1965 popular music is also rich with suggestive anecdotes (2010).

Studies have often tried to elaborate local markers or special qualities of New Zealand popular music. Of particular interest here is work dealing with coffee-house singer Peter Cape's self-described "vernacular ballads"—a vernacularistic expression referring to their recognisably local stories and slang—recorded in the early-1960s (Steele 2001). Interestingly, too, some writers have identified a DIY approach—made necessary by the country's geographical isolation and modest music industry base—as characterising local music production (e.g., Stahl 2011). The DIY ethos has been particularly linked to bands associated with the Flying Nun record label during the 1980s, writers suggesting that a poverty of means became part of the label's aesthetic (e.g., see McKessar 1988).

Nonetheless, the vernacular dimensions of New Zealand popular music have rarely been a direct focus of attention. Even the concept of a DIY "tradition" remains fairly undeveloped, both in its detail and as a broad cultural hypothesis. In many ways, the overall tendency to concentrate on key musicians, select genres and scenes, and canonical recordings, has obscured the significance of the informal processes by which the vernacular might influence popular music.

Folk music

The vernacular concept has taken firm root in folk music studies in America, Great Britain, and Canada, as we have seen, helping researchers overcome prescriptive notions of "folk music" from the 1980s onwards. What was previously considered "folk music" remained relevant in its own right, but was approached in more neutral terms and as only one strand of the music-making traditions being studied. Folk music research in New Zealand, therefore, even though it has not employed the vernacular concept, has inevitably documented music of interest.

The folksong anthologies compiled by the mid-twentieth century collectors form one subset of relevant work (e.g., Bailey and Roth 1967; Colquhoun 1972; Cleveland 1991; Garland 1996). Although these anthologies are populist publications with only limited annotations, they contain songs relating to a range of social groups, musical activities, and community traditions dating from the early nineteenth-century onwards which often bear the hallmarks of the vernacular (i.e. via parody, tune-borrowing, local adaptation). One anthology even describes its contents as "home-made" songs (Bailey and Roth 1967:6). Ultimately, however, these anthologies only assemble a diverse array of products of the vernacular domain. On their own, the songs—selected mainly to illustrate a romantic-nationalist view of New Zealand history—evoke little sense of the source music-making.

A handful of scholarly studies associated with the folk music collecting, however, provide some closer views. These include Frank Fyfe's articles on "make-it-yourself" instruments, like the benzene-tin fiddle (1970) and the "flagonophone" made from beer flagons (1971), and Angela Annabell's doctoral thesis which analyses the complex histories of selected New Zealand songs (1975). Nonetheless, most ongoing "folksong" research (see Introduction, fn1) has continued to focus on particular items singled-out for their explicit "New Zealand" content. The source music-making has seldom been studied in its own right.

Research into informal soldiers' songs by Les Cleveland stands out for just this reason (e.g., see 1959, 1994). Based upon Cleveland's personal experiences during World War II, these studies show that army life created various settings where songs with satirical and ribald themes could be performed, created, spread, and re-adapted. Apart from a few direct descriptions of performance contexts and creative processes (e.g., 1994:37-41, 148), though, he mainly concentrates on a broader textual analysis to determine how the songs functioned to help soldiers cope with their predicament.

Studies of children's rhymes, music, and games, especially related to the unsupervised play of the so-called New Zealand "wild childhood", are also germane (Belich 2001:356-367). Brian Sutton-Smith carried out pioneering research on children's play in school grounds, streets, and bush areas—all clearly vernacular domains—in the late-1940s and discovered this had included singing, rhyming, improvised instruments, and

even makeshift street bands (1959, 1981). Subsequent research has focused on the playground traditions of clapping, chanting, and singing games (e.g., Ackerley 2007).

Another topic of interest is a folklore study of university student "extravs" (short for "extravaganzas") of the mid-twentieth century. Combining satirical drama, song, and cross-dressing male ballet, these stage shows were usually "thrown together" annually on a short order basis. Moira Smith has coined the term "ephemeral tradition" to describe how the extravs maintained signature continuities and yet generated few enduring songs (2007), but the vernacular concept also seems applicable.

Overall, then, folk music and folklore studies have provided much evidence of the informal processes of the vernacular domain. Nonetheless, most work has focused on collecting songs for revivalist purposes, especially material related to social groups perceived as the original "folk" (e.g., sailors, gold miners, shearers) of a romantic myth of New Zealand origins. Performance contexts and styles have been little studied.

Domestic, community, and social music

Similar kinds of domestic, community, and social music have also been approached from other disciplinary perspectives. Several studies have looked at domestic music-making in New Zealand. Kirstine Moffat, for example, has discussed the iconic household instrument of colonial period—the piano—from a cultural history perspective (2009). It is the more descriptive works, however, that have better revealed the vernacular elements of such music-making, including hodgepodge household sheet-music collections, the styles of family pianists, and the decoration of musical parlours (e.g., Thomas 1995; MacGibbon 2007).

Amateur brass bands and pipe bands have also been identified as manifestations of "vernacular culture" in New Zealand (Kuiper 2007:177-178). Nonetheless, existing studies have tended to focus on the broader history, competitive achievements, and ethnic traditions of these ensembles, meaning that their vernacular features are less evident. One exception is a work on the distinctive Kokatahi Band, whose unison style played on assorted instrumentation clearly embraces making-our-own principles (Graham 2001).

Research into community entertainments with a music element is also of interest. This includes a study of Savage Club revues, a community-based practice not dissimilar to the "ephemeral tradition" of student extravs (Thomas 1998a). Race-calling and other functional chants have been identified as another important strand of New Zealand "vernacular culture" (Kuiper 2007:174), and studies of these activities have indeed noted the informally "grown into" proficiency of practitioners (e.g., Kuiper 1991; Beban 2001). Recordings of the wild sound-making—cheers, calls, and chants—at sports matches and similar events, while perhaps lying beyond the boundary of "music" as conventionally defined, can also be regarded as having documented expressions of vernacular dominion (*Karanga Voices* 2001).

Social dancing has been another important form of self-entertainment in New Zealand from colonial time onwards. Studies sometimes describe features of community dances that suggest they operated as vernacular domains for attendees, by presenting opportunities for conviviality, courtship, and illicit drinking (e.g., White 2007; Griffiths 2008). Another writer has noted pertinent features of 1940s rural dances, including the "ear playing" of musicians and bands who encouraged group singing on the dance floor (Thomas 2004:121-136).

The last-mentioned work is Allan Thomas' "historical ethnography" of music in the township of Hawera in 1946 (2004), a work that has significantly influenced the methods used in the present thesis. Through the use of archival recordings and oral history interviews, Thomas describes many facets of the town's music-making at a particular historical moment, its church choirs, brass bands, the town orchestra and Savage Club, dance bands, school music, and Māori music. Although Thomas does not cite the vernacular concept, the overall focus on how people took the liberty of customising musical resources to suit local musicianship and community needs reveals the vernacular at work in many areas.

Māori music

Although overlapping into all the areas covered above, Māori music has generally been treated separately in New Zealand music studies, a separation that reflects its indigenous

basis and culturally-specific meanings. Reviewing this literature with the Western concept of vernacular in mind, though, reveals various interesting features. Indeed, observations of Māori life made by early European visitors—for example, "here every man is his own musician… never at a loss for the means of entertainment"—suggest that a self-reliant musical approach was endemic (Savage 1807:80-81).

Traditional forms of Māori music have been researched since the mid-nineteenth-century. Initially, most research was conducted by Pākehā, but a strong vein of Māori scholarship also emerged with the work of Sir Apirana Ngata (e.g., see 1928-1929) and continues to the present day. Researchers have collected numerous traditional chants, haka (posture dances), and waiata (songs), and also investigated the use of music in ritual, ceremony, and warfare, to accompany manual tasks, and for entertainment. The playing of taonga pūoro (traditional musical instruments) has also been studied.

Early ethnographers noted a range of features from which a vernacular approach might be inferred. Elsdon Best, for example, identified a widespread impulse among Māori to create new songs on the most "trivial" of pretexts, like the loss of a fish-hook (1976 [1925]:201). Such glimpses are somewhat rarer in later work, though, with scholars giving priority to more prestigious and stable elements of the traditional music culture. Only relatively recently, for instance, was the genre of pao—short songs performed mainly for entertainment, often improvised and ephemeral—documented (McLean 1996:117).

A vernacular liberty can also be perceived in Māori adaptations of Western objects and cultural elements. These include use of household items like billy-cans for song accompaniment and construction of traditional instruments from material like metal piping (e.g., see McLean 1996:120, 186). A form of comic improvised dancing probably adapted from Hawai'ian hula, kopikopi, sometimes performed for marae entertainment, also seems to involve a casual fun attitude (76-78). The borrowing of the tunes of popular songs for waiata-ā-ringa (action song) is also of interest (Shennan 1984), with song anthologies showing that tribal composers have created songs for both events of consequence and informal occasions like shearing-gang parties (e.g., Pewhairangi 1985).

Playful mingling and adapting of Western genres for entertainment purposes is also a feature of some Māori popular music, seen, for example, in the development of the "Māori showband" format (Bourke 2010:328-333). Tony Mitchell has also characterised the use of te reo Māori (Māori language) in rap music as a "resistance vernacular": an assertion of political resistance to Pākehā mainstream culture (2000). There has also been some relevant work on the spread of Māori music into wider New Zealand culture, including a study of how Māori lyrics can turn into nonsense language through being informally sung by Pākehā who have little idea of their actual meaning (Archer 2007).

Māori music studies, then, contain glimpses of the vernacular and yet this perspective has not generally been supported by predominant scholarly approaches. Features developed from encounters with Western music, for example, have tended to be considered in terms of acculturation into a European "musical system" (e.g., McLean 1996:274-275), or as a restatement of Māori identity within the struggle for cultural survival (e.g., Katene 1991, 1998). Such emphases do not readily admit consideration of "mucking around" as a source of musical change or creativity. This is perhaps also why common forms of casual music-making, like Māori party singalongs (see Chapter 6), are seldom even mentioned by scholars: they do not fit accepted notions of "Māori music".

Summary

The literature of New Zealand music studies, as this survey demonstrates, has opened various windows onto the vernacular in New Zealand music. A vernacular approach can be imputed to the makeshift activities of early British settlers, across various forms of community and social music-making, in the practical ingenuity required of local popular music, and as a strand of self-reliant adaptability in Māori music. An overall sense emerges that the country's geographical isolation, being located some 2000 kilometres from the nearest large land mass, Australia, could be responsible for stimulating a widespread DIY approach in music culture.

Inevitably, though, even when previous research agendas have partly intersected with a musicology of the vernacular, writers have looked elsewhere for the music's

significance (e.g., hieratic achievement, popular cachet, national identity, traditionality). Due to these other agendas, the vernacular has been revealed only in fits and starts, and usually in aspects that were unimportant to the researchers. Rarely is the vernacular described to a satisfying level of detail (e.g., Sutton-Smith 1981; Thomas 2004; Smith 2007) and even here, it is not explicitly identified. It can therefore be concluded that the musicology of the vernacular represents a distinct perspective that must be pursued on its own terms.

The literature review has underlined the value of certain approaches in pursuing the research agenda set out at the start of this chapter. Ethnographic methods like participant-observer fieldwork, interviews, and song-collecting seem to have most effectively revealed the performance elements, musical adaptations, and emic attitudes needed to understand the vernacular in music-making. Previous studies have thus provided important methodological precedents for the present thesis.

Methodology

The two studies in this thesis have used a combination of methods familiar from ethnomusicology, folk music studies, and other music sub-disciplines. Various factors determined have the particular methodological mixtures—including the social, cultural, and historical context; the performance format; the available sources; and the opportunities which presented themselves during research—but for reasons given already, a broadly ethnographic approach has been deemed best suited to a musicology of the vernacular. Because each study has also pursued this research agenda, they can be more specifically described as “ethnographies of the vernacular”. The following section provides a general methodological overview, with the individual studies giving more specific details of the research processes.

Ethnography and historical ethnography

Ethnography is a well-established approach in the music sub-disciplines of ethnomusicology and folk music studies. “Ethnography” refers both to a research process and the written outcome of this process. On the broadest level, ethnography of

music is based on a conception of music as a human activity to be considered holistically and in context. Anthony Seeger defines it as

> a descriptive approach to music going beyond the writing down of sounds to the writing down of how sounds are conceived, made, appreciated and influence other individuals, groups, and social and musical processes. The ethnography of music is writing about the ways people make music.... It usually includes both detailed descriptions and general statements about a people's music.... While ethnographies are sometimes only descriptive and neither interpret nor compare, not all are so. (1992:89)

That such an approach could conceivably be applied to any type of music-making is crucial. In each instance—regardless of whether the music is made in a street, house, bush clearing, or concert hall—ethnography strives to treat "different forms of music as equally worthy of study on their own terms" (Finnegan 1989:7). "As a transcription of musical events and musical activity", Allan Thomas notes, "an ethnography is different from the aesthetic appreciation of music or musical analysis" (2004:10). Instead, it seeks to understand music-making in terms of the musician's own experiences, community, and values.

An ethnography may look at various kinds of "study objects" (Stone 2008:18-22; Myers 1992). In the present thesis, these are a community-based singsong culture (tramping club singsongs) and an instrumental style (Māori guitar strumming style), with each study focusing on particular eras, communities, or sets of individuals. Their findings thus remain particularistic and provisional to some extent. As James Clifford concludes, "Ethnographic truths are... inherently *partial*—committed and incomplete" (1986:7, original italics; cf. Merriam 1964:49-51). Nonetheless, by looking closely at specific cases of music-making, ethnography provides a finer-grained impression of its meanings than is obtained with more generalist approaches. Ethnography presents "thick description" of music-making in its immediate context (Geertz 1973:3-30).

The Māori guitar strumming style study has dealt mainly (but not exclusively) with music-making of the present, while the tramping club singsong study has mainly looked to the musical past. The latter has thus been approached as an "historical ethnography".

Many ethnographies include historical narratives to contextualise an ethnographic present (e.g., Dunn 1980). By contrast:

> A *historical ethnography* provides a description and analysis of a past era of a people of some particular, identifiably locality, using archival sources and, if relevant, local oral history sources. The ethnography may be general, covering many aspects of social life during that era, or it may concentrate on specific features, such as social ecology, politics, or religion. (Silverman and Gulliver 1992:16, original italics)

But the musical past is not so accessible to investigation as contemporary topics. "Not all of the circumstances of human interaction or musical performance in the past have been preserved", Ruth Stone observes, and researchers have to "infer what might have taken place" (2008:181). On the other hand, adding an historical perspective to ethnography has benefits:

> An ethnography... brings the practical activities of music-making to the fore. But an *historical* ethnography also has the benefit of hindsight; it has a wider perspective on the issues that influence the everyday patterns, which are observed in the ethnography. It places the music in relation to the particular forces which shape this society. (Thomas 2004:10, original italics)

Furthermore, the ethnographies here, while centring on specific places, groups, and eras—past and present—both range a little more widely. They note some significant national parallels, map the spread of musical products, see how vernacular domains change over time, and bring stories up to date. This wider purview allows various forms of diachronic change in the music to be observed. Proceeding outwards from the core ethnography and looking back, the shape of that which is "always in motion" (i.e. the vernacular) comes into focus.

Fieldwork and interviews

Ethnography of music is associated with certain research techniques, the most common being participant-observer fieldwork. Here, researchers immerse themselves in the life of a community and learn about the music firsthand (Myers 1992). Through developing a rapport with community members, they begin to absorb the culture of the music

unselfconsciously, their direct participation allowing its "personal, expressive, artistic, emotional, even ecstatic" dimensions to be experienced (31). As observers, though, researchers are able to perceive features which are more implicit and require further elucidation. Fieldwork also often involves interviews with practitioners and sound/video recording; some researchers may enter into an apprenticeship with an expert musician (Jackson, B. 1987). The Māori guitar strumming study has employed many of these fieldwork methods.

Historical ethnography methods have also been used. A work that has guided me in this regard, as mentioned already, is Allan Thomas' study of the music in 1946 in the New Zealand town of Hawera (2004). Here, Thomas shows how the musical past can be reconstructed ethnographically from the memories of musicians gathered in oral histories, photographs, publications, and recordings originally made by a public radio "Mobile Unit". These archival recordings are crucial in preserving performance nuances which "give a clue to musical aesthetics... and the ideology which they reflect", clarifying what was found "appropriate and right" in a given musical community of the past (9). Archival recordings have also been utilised in the present work to investigate aspects of music-making which could not be ascertained by looking at a score or song book.

Oral history interviews provide a valuable reflexive tool in historical ethnography: once the musical past is beyond living memory, we lose an important source of clarification and revelation. Both the ethnographies in the present work are supported by interviews where people elucidated important matters and offered memories. Interviewees were initially contacted in a variety of ways—some through a network of personal contacts, many through recommendations from other interviewees—and agreed to take part in a subsequent recorded interview: each was a "self-selected" interviewee. Informed-consent forms and information sheets were given to all interviewees, through which they could choose to remain anonymous (most did not), and check over the transcript for comment, amendment, and supplementation (many did). Sometimes follow-up conversations or interviews ensued.

Interviews were guided by pre-prepared topic lists, but had an informal conversational tone. Most were conducted in the person's own home. For the tramping singsong study,

orally-transmitted repertoire was of special interest and I used "finding lists" of song titles (Goldstein 1964:156-159) to jog people's memories in the hope of collecting new variants. Interviews about the Māori guitar strumming style also led to practical demonstrations and I usually had my own guitar at hand to reciprocate if appropriate. Some sessions became singsongs and jams, meaning that new questions relating to making-our-own music could naturally arose out of the situation.

Various other strategies were also used to bridge the gap between the present and ethnographic past. Philip Bohlman describes visiting former Jewish synagogues in Austria as "fieldwork in the ethnomusicological past": the physical encounter with spaces, acoustics, and locations in the present providing experiential insights (1997). For the tramping singsong study, I also visited former sites of music-making to better appreciate their atmosphere. Contemporary practices also provided insights. Gage Averill describes his social history of American barbershop singing as "informed by ethnography", key questions arising out of his involvement with the contemporary scene (2002:16-17). Here, the tramping singsong study was heavily informed by my own lifelong tramping experiences and through belonging to one of the clubs being studied. The social dynamics of tramping, the club ethos, wilderness experiences, and occasional group singing: such continuities offered pathways back into the singsongs of forty years ago.

Documents, recordings, discourse

The studies have also investigated publications, recordings, and other artefacts. These have served not only as documentary sources, but sometimes became subtopics in their own right. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett observes that when researchers focus only on orally-transmitted culture they inadvertently "imagine a world so fully acoustic that it emerges as a world without artifacts… without books… without things" (1998:319). A country like New Zealand—highly literate, mechanized, materialistic—can scarcely be imagined as such a place. The recurring appearance of "things" during the course of the present research was a reminder that the vernacular, too, can practically and expressively intersect with the material world.

The tramping singsong study, for example, included consideration of club song books. These provided valuable clues about musical repertories—with private manuscripts allowing items elsewhere undocumented to also be recovered—and yet also illuminated the singsong culture in other ways, through their mode of production, quirky local touches, and histories as objects. Literary historian Lydia Wevers describes how the torn pages, pencil inscriptions, the even smudges on the leaves of books can contribute to understanding their readers' lives and personalities (2010). Individual copies of tramping song books similarly spoke of past conviviality and creative impulses, page margins sometimes becoming vernacular domains for inscribing songs and other marginalia. The physicality of the Māori strumming style when used in certain performance practices, too, was borne out in marks left upon the bodies of acoustic guitars.

Both studies also considered commercial sound recordings associated with the topics, comparisons with the source inspiration revealing how products of the vernacular can be transformed for mass consumption. Critical responses to such recordings were also of interest—even where there was a lacuna. Archie Green observes that American "hillbilly" recordings of the 1920s went unappreciated for many decades as documents of traditional music: a critical and scholarly neglect that demands explanation (1972:33-61). The largely-unnoticed presence of the Māori guitar strumming style on hundreds of local records also pointed to larger issues around cultural identity and valuation in New Zealand (see Chapter 8).

Written descriptions of the making-our-own music, where this occurred, was also relevant. Discourse studies have shown that language usage "in habitual situations of social exchange" contributes to the maintenance of shared meanings in a given culture (Rapport and Overing 2007:134; cf. van Dijk 1997); Michel Foucault has conceptualised discourse as determining all subject positions and power relations in a given field (Rabinow 1984). In the present ethnographies, writings like magazine articles, books, and newsletter reports were examined to see how the vernacular was perceived in terms of the musical/cultural ideologies of the writers, as conveyed through their vocabulary, tone, and implicit valuations. And, just as researchers have sometimes turned to traditional carvings of dancers (e.g., Shennan 1984) and musicians (e.g.,

Nunns and Thomas 2005) to recover past meanings, visual representations of music-making in song books and elsewhere were also considered.

Ethnographic positioning

In ethnography, the intuitions, decisions, and interpretations of the researcher will be informed by their background, personality, and interests. These give them a particular point of view that will inevitably influence a research process dependent upon interactive fieldwork and interviews (Titon 1985; Cooley 1997:16-17). It is important, therefore, for researchers to consider and acknowledge their initial "positioning" in relation to the topic being studied.

My ethnographic positioning in the thesis studies was strongly informed by their geographic focus: both ethnographies looked mainly at music-making or communities in Wellington, capital city of New Zealand, where I have lived for eighteen years and which, furthermore, is near my home town of Waikanae. In contrast with projects where ethnographers travel to distant localities and societies, the studies here can be considered examples of "ethnography at home" (Jackson 1987; cf. Stock 2008).

This kind of study has the benefit of practical convenience. My fieldwork often lay literally within walking distance of home; some interviewees lived only a few streets away. For the tramping singsong study, I had many long-standing connections and memories of my own to draw from. Across the entire project, too, my life experiences of music-making—of childhood piano lessons, informal family singalongs, guitar jams with teenage friends, and playing in bands and folk groups—all proved valuable. Being a guitarist was especially advantageous in the Māori strumming study, enabling me to understand techniques and to make myself useful in the kapa haka group I joined. Perhaps, too, never having been a professional musician gave me a special appreciation of and attraction to making-our-own music.

But "ethnography at home" creates its own issues. As Nigel Rapport notes, for instance, "It may not always be possible to gain that distantiation which has been the hallmark of anthropological method – so-called 'culture-shock', by which the conventions of local life are seen as strange and thereby calling for translation" (Rapport and Overing

2007:23). Researchers must thus be alert to recycling the conceptual categories "natural" to both them and their informants. They must learn to question their most basic assumptions.

One means of achieving distantiation is through being aware of an "insider-outsider" dynamic, whereby a researcher acknowledges their position as an "outsider" to the musical community of "insiders" they are studying. Doing "ethnography at home" does not automatically make researchers insiders. As Marcia Herndon observes, ethnographers in some situations can be both outsiders and insiders (1993). In the ethnographies here, too, I found myself an outsider in some way or other, most obviously as a Pākehā New Zealander studying the Māori guitar strumming style. To conduct fieldwork with a kapa haka group, particularly, was to have a humbling encounter with a Māori world of which I had little previous experience.

The tramping singsong study also involved a kind of historical distantiation, the feeling encapsulated in novelist L.P. Hartley's observation that "the past is a foreign country". Among the aspects "foreign" to someone born in 1970, were the outrageous bawdy songs trampers performed that seem largely unknown to later generations and cast this mid-twentieth century music in an unfamiliar new light. Such perceptions of "otherness", John Tosh notes, help register historical distance and identify aspects most needing to be rendered explicable (Tosh and Lang 2006:9-11; cf. Bohlman 1997:148-149). At the same time, I was mindful that what seems strange now may have been so for some people back then: shock may be an appropriate response that need not always be "explained away". My gender (male) was another factor to consider. This became an advantage with the tramping study, in that I could readily collect bawdy songs—these being mostly sung by men—yet I naturally had less insight into women's perceptions of such material.

Lastly, something in the nature of the topics themselves created distance. Nigel Rapport observes that ethnography is an event that "breaks the quality of routine… both for the anthropologist and for the locals, and makes what is normal unfamiliar" (Rapport and Overing 2007:25). The present research, too, by looking at informal and taken-for-granted music-making, often provoked surprise when I first contacted potential interviewees. Throughout the research, I was repeatedly told by people that they had

"never really thought about it before". Simply by *not* taking for granted the taken-for-granted—even for just an hour or two—was to open a new door for us both.

Evoking the vernacular

> An ethnomusicological report should take its cue from the values and demeanour of the society…. But ethnomusicology is also concerned with translation—an explanation should be understood outside its culture. It must create a wider resonance of appreciation and understanding. It should allow unique qualities to be identified and comparisons to be made. (Thomas 1996:21)

An ethnography can be seen as a negotiation between meanings specific to a musical culture and general concepts that create wider understanding, which will be borne out in a written study that acquires its own particular narrative and form. No ethnographic "blueprints" exist ahead of time. Making an ethnography of the vernacular presents special challenges, too. How can we do justice to something people regard as just "mucking around"? How can the outlines of that which is "always in motion" be translated onto the printed page?

These issues arose with both ethnographies in this thesis. Often the boundaries of the study object were unclear, as when music-making was not a "stand-alone" activity—a named performance tradition or genre—but something casually woven into tramping or weekend socialising. Informal music might not have a definite performance structure, canon of repertoire, or aesthetic ideology. Each ethnography was also a "threshold study"—the topic previously little researched or even discussed before at length by practitioners themselves—resulting in an often puzzling array of interpretations about the music's meaning, some reflective and others intuitive.

This seeming amorphousness, I realised, must be expected with the vernacular and that the real challenge was to interpret such qualities positively. An absence of institutionalised "coherence" needed to be rethought as being valuable in its own right, as expressive of a certain ideology even, as something that could be vital in "critical contexts of existence... when 'something is at stake'" (Jackson 1996:4).

"Native" terms—people's own naming of features of their music—became crucial guides for interpretation. "When people speak or act to make something", Paul Bohannan observes, "they... evaluate their own statements and acts and usually... have some end in view. The mere assigning of words to acts and things is one form of cultural valuation" (quoted in Merriam 1964:31). Thus, even where informal music generates little native terminology, that which does take hold gains in significance. The widespread use of the expression "tramping songs" among trampers, for example, showed that their own repertoire was recognised as the most distinctive component of their singsong culture. Alternatively, the dozens of names bestowed upon a single guitar strumming pattern—the so-called "Māori strum"—indicated not confusion but an absence of cultural institutionalisation that allowed this feature to be freely identified in many ways.

Sometimes, however, it has seemed necessary to bring study objects more into focus—if they had no name or perhaps too many—by naming them myself. Any such acts of scholarly *a posteriori* naming have been carefully considered and are signalled in the ethnographies. Although they may prove contentious in some cases (e.g., "the Māori guitar strumming style"), I hope they will be considered part and parcel of my overall positive valuation and, in any case, they remain provisional.

Conversely, certain apparently-neutral music terms have been used sparingly. Scholars have sometimes noted problems with applying the Western term "music" in the context of non-Western cultures where no equivalent concept exists (e.g., Merriam 1964:63-67), but in these New Zealand studies, cultural hierarchy was more at issue. Terms like "musician", for example, tended to be understood as referring to professional or trained practitioners, or amateur enthusiasts, and thus seemed inappropriate for more general application. Rather than disregard the cultural backdrop which generate these connotations, I have instead sometimes referred, for example, to "people having the singsong". Such language choices seek to emphasise the universality of the vernacular in contrast with the tacit exclusivity of certain common terms.

Again and again in this thesis, too, I have sought inspiration in core phrases that people used to describe their music-making, like "we made our own entertainment" or "having a bit of a tutū" [i.e. mucking around]. These statements showed that people themselves

had no difficulty appreciating the essence of what they were doing, and it has seemed crucial to treat such descriptions in good faith, rather than sceptically or critically—as might befit other modes of scholarly analysis. The ethnographic imperative has been to treat these as positive valuations. Indeed, ultimately the framework of vernacular can be regarded as a general conceptual "translation" of these emic statements which enables wider understanding and comparison.

The written ethnographies have also been informed by certain challenges inherent to an inquiry into the vernacular. Each study is a narrative that culminates with an "image of the vernacular". But the vernacular, as an approach, a mode of informal action, is not something that can be directly presented or represented. It can have no actual presence in a written text. Each study has thus interwoven the main narrative with various pieces of evidence—interview quotations, historical texts, performance descriptions, musical transcriptions, and photographs; supplementary song texts and sound/video recordings are also provided—designed to call to mind the plenum of the vernacular. Stephen Tyler argues that ethnography can never offer a truly "scientific" description or representation of human activity or community. His conception of ethnography as "evocation" seems especially apt when dealing with the vernacular, with the written ethnography being

> a cooperatively evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer... a possible world of commonsense reality.... It is, in a word, poetry—not in its textual form, but in its return to the original context and function of poetry, which, by means of its performative break with everyday speech, evoked memories of the *ethos* of the community.... (1986:125-126)

The *ethos* or "commonsense reality" that the present ethnographies try to evoke is our shared intuition of a making-our-own domain of music for all people. The vernacular mode in music lies within reach, taken for granted usually, perhaps because of its very nature. These case studies are intended to kindle greater awareness of its possibilities.

PART TWO

Off the beaten track: singsongs in two Wellington tramping clubs

Chapter 3
Tramping club singsongs in Wellington

In April 1946, a series of "Welcome Home" celebrations were held by the Tararua Tramping Club for members who had returned from World War II. These culminated with a party weekend at Tauherenikau[1] Hut, a two hour walk into the Tararua Range north of Wellington. It was later reported in the club's newsletter *The Tararua Tramper*:

> Of course it rained; nice steady Tararua "derision." Arthur arrived with a piano accordion on his pack. Four big cooking fires were organized with personnel allotted to each…. Oilskinned forms flitted through the rain erecting tents, cutting wood, cooking or watching it; some just flitted, while inside the "chateau" Arthur prepared for the evening barn dance and posted pertinent placards. Wood had been chopped for a bonfire… but owing to continued rain, was only spasmodically patronised by a few quiet revellers. All hell had broken loose judging by the sound outside the hut; inside was saturnalia. Nolan Bros. Orchestra, including the piano accordion, was ensconced on a bunk, and got cracking on some hot rhythm. Terror was followed by admiration—"yuh gotta be fit"…. Strenuous exercise was interspersed with lighter items; songs… a hula… a mock court, an impromptu wrestling match…. Above all was a terrific volume of sound—imagine a hundred and three in Tauherenikau Hut! (Davidson 1946b)

In the post-WWII decades, such "saturnalias" were a regular feature of the Wellington club tramping—"tramping" being the New Zealand term for recreational walking in wilderness areas. Furthermore, countless singsongs sprang to life in the back of trucks transporting trampers to and from the mountains, in bush huts and around campfires, at interclub events, and reunions and parties back in town. Singing, veteran tramper Don Boswell told me, "was part of the whole scene, you couldn't escape from it" (interview A).The repertoire was diverse, ranging from evergreens and popular hits, through to bawdy items and local songs about tramping. Some lines from the popular Tararua Tramping Club item, 'The Tararua Ranges', convey the spirit of Wellington tramping at this time with typically exuberant irony:

[1] "Tauherenikau" is the current spelling; variant spellings in quotations in this study are left uncorrected.

If you stand on Lambton Quay,
On Friday night then you will see,
In rain and snow the trampers go,
To the Tararua Ranges.

Away, away, with billy and pack,
A rollicking down the mountain track,
We'll all get lost and never come back,
In the Tararua Ranges.

Singsongs, in fact, were integral to tramping club life around New Zealand at the time. Dozens of tramping song books were compiled, even a commercial LP of local songs—*Bush Singalong* (Cleveland et al. [1963])—was released, although the informal music of trampers generally had a low public profile. By the mid-1970s, however, the singsong culture was apparently in decline nationally. Singing sessions rarely take place today in the Tararua Tramping Club and other Wellington clubs.

The fact that the tramping singsong culture was based far from the public arena partly explains its fairly minimal coverage in New Zealand music studies. Being a participatory amateur music not based on making recordings or finding an audience, it can hardly be expected to have drawn the attention, for instance, of popular music scholars. One group who have shown some interest are the folk music collectors. In 1967, the New Zealand Folklore Society suggested that "tramping songs" were a promising area of study (see Brown 2007:135) and several collectors included items in their anthologies (Bailey and Roth 1967; Cleveland 1991; cf. Archer 2005). Some preliminary song indexing has also been undertaken (Harding 1992:89-91), but overall treatment has been limited. An account of the Wellington singsong heyday by tramper John Ross remains the only article published to date (1998; cf. Brown 2008b). Possibly, folksong collectors have found it difficult to accept tramping songs as "traditional folk songs", given their relatively recent vintage. The lukewarm overall interest also hints at larger musicological issues that need to be tackled. Outdoor recreational singing has been mostly neglected in other countries, too (for some work, see Becker 1946:73-105; Mechling 1980; Lambert 2000). Even the "singsong" performance format itself has received surprisingly little attention (cf. Russell 1990). The term itself appears in no musical dictionary I have examined. Despite their ubiquity—most people having

participated in informal group singing at one stage or another—singsongs seem to lack the qualities that most music scholarship places value upon.

This ethnography uses the concept of vernacular to investigate tramping singsongs in the Wellington region during the 1940s-1960s period, when these events were most popular. It focuses on two local clubs—the Tararua Tramping Club (TTC) and the Victoria University College Tramping Club (VUCTC, varsity club)[2]—thus showing how the vernacular enabled each small community to shape their music-making in different ways. There is also some consideration of the wider New Zealand tramping scene. The study is spread over Chapters 3 to 5. This chapter outlines the research approach, presents some contextual background about tramping, Wellington tramping history, and the two clubs being considered, then describes the main situations in which singsongs happened. Chapter 4 begins with a reconstructed ethnographic description of a tramping singsong, before examining these performance events more closely, considering their repertoire, social dynamics, and performance features, along with song-making process and local songs. Chapter 5 discusses how trampers perceived the singsongs and notices key historical trends of the post-War period, then examines the *Bush Singalong* LP, tramping song books, and the decline of the singsong culture.

Overview of research

My knowledge of singing in tramping clubs is grounded in a background of family tramping experiences. I "grew up" tramping and have many memories of holidaying in the mountains. Both my parents were long-term members of the TTC—my father also tramped with the VUCTC in the early-1950s—and our family friends included other club members. Songs like 'The Tararua Ranges' were sung at holiday get-togethers and car journeys, and I listened many times to our copy of *Bush Singalong*. These experiences acquired new resonance around 2002 when I became interested in New Zealand folk music, prompting projects like a radio documentary, *Songs of Billy and Pack* (Brown and Perkins 2004). Ultimately, the topic was a central inspiration for this thesis.

[2] When Victoria University College became independent in 1961, the tramping club was renamed Victoria University of Wellington Tramping Club. Throughout this study, the club will be referred to by its original name.

Tramping singsongs seemed readymade for a study of the vernacular. They were just the kind of face-to-face informal music regarded as a *locus classicus* of the vernacular (Pickering and Green 1987b). Their hodgepodge repertoires and local parodies were also encouraging signs. Moreover, in preliminary interviews, people often talked about singsongs in terms synonymous with the "vernacular" concept. Singing in the back of a truck, for instance, as it sped through a Friday evening twilight toward the mountains, was described as "making your own music as you go" (Maurice Perry, interview). All these factors strongly supported the choice of topic as a case study. The TTC and VUCTC were selected for reasons of familiarity; as being the source of many classic songs known throughout New Zealand; and because they were very different clubs, thus highlighting the varying outcomes of the vernacular.

The Wellington tramping singsong heyday is now many decades past and the study has thus mainly been approached as an "historical ethnography" (see Thomas 2004). Oral history interviews with older trampers have been of paramount importance in investigating this music-making. Among those interviewed were my parents, several family friends, and others I was advised to contact, many of whom still tramp and socialise together through the TTC (see Plate 1). In total, twenty-four interviews with a total of twenty-four trampers were held (including group and follow-up interviews), supplemented with others recorded earlier. Interviewees were mostly retirees aged from their sixties to eighties, representing a diverse mixture of occupations, from teachers, professionals, and tradesmen, through to gardeners, housewives, and civil servants. Until the late-1950s, both clubs had a higher proportion of male to female members—singsongs thus taking place on mixed and sometimes all-male trips—and this was also reflected in the gender ratios of interviewees (eighteen men to six women).

The interview process also presented an opportunity to collect tramping repertoire that had not been documented before. Such collecting, I reasoned, would help create a better sense of each club's singsong corpus. To prompt people's memories, I compiled titles and first lines into a "finding list" (Goldstein 1964). A total of 226 songs—many only fragments—and 10 recitations were subsequently collected. I was also kindly granted access to personal and club manuscripts containing hundreds more texts. Together with song books and other sources, these have allowed extensive portraits of the TTC and

VUCTC repertoires to be reconstructed; see Appendices 2 and 3 on CD-ROM. Ninety-eight song texts are given in Appendix 4. Song titles cited in the text are marked with an asterisk if they are included in this appendix (e.g., 'Waiouru'*).

Plate 1: **Tramper interviewees**

These photographs show some of the trampers interviewed for this study. Top left image: taken at the 2008 TTC "50 year members" celebration, with Graeme Claridge, retired scientist and former VUCTC member (extreme left); John Gates, retired architect (with beard, back row); Pam Gates, retired teacher, and Bill Gates, retired optometrist (front right); and the late Andy Andersen, civil engineer (middle front). Top right image: taken at the 2010 TTC "50 year members" celebration, with Janet King, retired public servant (left), and Judith Claridge, retired librarian (right). Bottom left image: Don Brown, retired accountant, and former VUCTC and TTC member. Bottom right image: taken at Waerenga Hut, 2004, with Dave Gobey, retired public servant and TTC member (left), and Chris Horne, gardener, former VUCTC and TTC member (with blue hat).

Michael Brown; Peter Penhall (top left)

Investigation of archives and club publications has also been undertaken for descriptions, photographs, and relevant information. TTC sources included the newsletter *The Tararua Tramper* (*TT*), the annual journal *Tararua*, and the club's own archives; VUCTC sources included the club records held in the Victoria University of Wellington library. Two private tape recordings of TTC celebrations held in 1974 and 1983, while lying slightly outside the timeframe of interest, have contributed to an understanding of the atmosphere, performance dynamics, and sonic textures of singsongs. An edited excerpt of the 1974 recording is included on the supplementary CD, along with singing by interviewees, and excerpts from vinyl recordings. Former head of Kiwi Records, Tony Vercoe, was also interviewed about the *Bush Singalong* LP. Lastly, some publications of other Wellington tramping clubs were examined and interviews held with some members (not all cited here).

Although centred on the Wellington region, the case study has also looked a little beyond the core ethnography to the wider tramping singsong culture in New Zealand. National publications like the *FMC Bulletin* were consulted, for instance, along with tramping and related song books from around the country in archival and personal collections (for a checklist, see Appendix 1). Several TTC and VUCTC interviewees also described their experiences as members of clubs based in other regions.

This historical ethnography has also been heavily informed by my own personal tramping experiences. In the late-1990s, I revived my tramping interest to introduce my daughter to the New Zealand mountains and have since undertaken many trips. Some were private excursions; others were with the TTC, which I joined in 2007. These experiences have provided valuable latter-day perspectives on the singsongs. There were numerous parallels, for instance, between the contemporary social dynamics of club tramping and those of the 1950s-era remembered by interviewees. Heading into the ranges regularly was a way to check hypotheses against actual experience.

Overall, while not every aspect of the TTC and VUCTC singsong heyday can now be recovered, the material here gathered has permitted a reliable overview of the topic. Some areas would benefit from further study, while the singsong cultures of clubs based in other parts of New Zealand await future research.

My ethnographic positioning to the subject has been another important consideration. As a TTC member already acquainted with many interviewees and learning tramping songs in childhood, I have been a kind of "insider" with this study. Certain aspects of the mid-twentieth century singsong culture, however, provided some useful "distantiation" (Rapport and Overing 2007:23). The many bawdy songs—ranging from the mildly satirical through to the fantastically obscene—that I discovered were performed was one such area: this material had not been sung on family holidays when I was a child! Such items highlighted some less obvious features of the post-WWII scene, including the value that was placed on subversive fun; the conservatism of the broader society; and the higher proportion of men to women tramping. My own gender has also inevitably affected the research into such ribaldry. The bawdiest items were generally a male-only preserve and being male has probably allowed me to more readily collect them, but obviously I have had less intuitive understanding of women's perspectives on this repertoire. Due to its potentially offensive and "unprintable" content, bawdy song has long been a troublesome research topic, too, often being expurgated, derided, or simply ignored by scholars (see Legman 1970 [1964], 1990). This thesis can hardly ignore songs, however, which exemplify secondary connotations of "vernacular", like "strong language, profanity" (Wyld 1934:1355). Rather than passing moral judgement on bawdy songs, my approach here has instead been to try to understand why these were valued in the tramping milieu and how groups negotiated their performance.

Another notable challenge of the research was describing music-making that was not a named practice—like "blues" or "Irish fiddling"—but rather based on widely-varying informal events that were part of a wider party-singing culture. It was often difficult to retrospectively grasp the experiences of different clubs, cohorts, sub-groups, and individuals. To bring some focus to the discussion, the term "tramping singsong" has been coined (although this was not used by trampers themselves). Yet the difficulties of the research also highlighted something crucial: the highly adaptable nature of the singsong performance format. Tramping singsongs were not structured occasions, but vernacular domains where music was informally shaped according to the specific resources, preferences, and moods of participants at the time: inevitably, each was different. This making-our-own flexibility was a key musical value, I eventually

realised, embodying an impulse that was central to these trampers' experiences of post-WWII tramping: liberty from predetermined plans, regulations, timetables, and roles.

Tramping

Tramping is a recreation that involves self-contained walking journeys through New Zealand wilderness areas. These range from easy day trips through to multiday excursions with overnight stays in huts or camping. Mountain ranges are very accessible in New Zealand and many people have some tramping experience: a recent survey found almost ten percent of New Zealanders had gone tramping at least once a year (Sport & Recreation New Zealand 2008:4). Those who tramp on a regular basis comprise a fairly small group, though. The Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (FMC), for example, representing most tramping and mountaineering clubs, has an overall membership of around 11,000 (2010). There is probably a larger number of non-club affiliated trampers.

The origins of tramping are usually dated to the founding of the Tararua Tramping Club in Wellington in July 1919 (Maclean 1994:126; Ross 2008:52). Arising from efforts to establish a tourist trail through the Tararua Range, the TTC organised trips, constructed huts, and helped cut tracks. Other clubs soon sprang up around the country following the TTC model. In 1931, the FMC was set up to further the cause of wilderness recreation at a national level.

Initially, tramping was perceived as a fairly novel concept, differing from earlier wilderness excursions like casual picnics and tourist walking tours. Although much less risky and expensive than mountaineering—thus making it more accessible to the wider population—tramping was initially regarded with incredulity by the public (Ross 2008:63-66). It seemed aimless when compared with outdoor pursuits like hunting, while several high-profile searches for lost parties highlighted its dangers. Public commentators questioned the recreation's moral propriety, too, in light of the fact that mixed parties, sometimes including unmarried young women, slept in the same huts together. For their part, clubs promoted tramping as physically and mentally invigorating, an antidote to modern life pressures and a more authentic experience of the

wilderness than commercial tourism (62-63). By the 1950s, tramping was firmly established as a valid—if still somewhat unusual—outdoor recreation.

Tramping was, in fact, the New Zealand manifestation of a worldwide enthusiasm for recreational walking that arose in the late-nineteenth century. Different versions included rambling (Great Britain), *Wandervogel* (Germany), hiking (USA), and bush walking (Australia). These walking sports partly grew out of the appreciation of natural landscapes awakened by the Romantic Movement. By the mid-nineteenth century, Rebecca Solnit observes, figures like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, William Wordsworth and Henry David Thoreau, had redefined the wilderness as a place of sublime beauty and spiritual inspiration to be savoured on foot, rather than as simply a backdrop or obstacle to human endeavour (2000). Such ideas had stimulated the rise of European mountaineering in the mid-1800s. The recreational walking movements that came several decades later were stimulated by workers gaining more leisure time and the building of transport networks which improved access to mountain areas (Maclean 1994:107-108). By the 1890s, people in countries like the United Kingdom were gaining both the opportunity and the means to escape crowded cities for the countryside on a regular basis. Similar developments in early-twentieth century New Zealand informed the rise of tramping.

The New Zealand wilderness

The New Zealand wilderness imparts a distinctively rugged flavour to tramping. The country lies on a major tectonic boundary and its geography is dominated by mountain ranges. Over one third of New Zealand's land area is administered as public parks and reserves (Department of Conservation 2010:7), encompassing peaks and ice-fields, tussock uplands and subalpine beech forests, and deep valleys and temperate rainforests. New Zealand is also subject to dynamic weather carried by the prevailing westerly winds of the South Pacific. When tramping, one gains a keen appreciation of the natural forces at work in the New Zealand environment, whether negotiating track washouts, crossing swollen streams, or watching an approaching cold front from a high mountain ridge. This exhilarating and potentially treacherous landscape imparts an adventuresome flavour to tramping (see Plate 2); but perhaps also helps account for its relatively small core following.

Plate 2: **Mountain scenes**

Michael Brown

The New Zealand mountains also require trampers to be self-sufficient. Most trips traverse remote uninhabited areas and all the basic means of survival—food, cooking equipment, all-weather gear, spare clothing, sleeping bag, first aid, navigation gear, etc.—have to be carried by pack. Trampers travel as a self-contained expedition, both as individuals and as a party, with shelter provided by huts, tents, or natural bivouacs.

Heavy boots are worn to provide solid footing on rough bush tracks while carrying a weighty pack (see Plate 3).

Plate 3: **Bush tracks**

Michael Brown

Tramping normally follows a journey structure—a sequence of huts occupied, rivers crossed, and "tops" reached—through the network of existing tracks. Usually the route is planned beforehand, but experienced trampers sometimes prefer to explore untracked wilderness, perhaps adding alpine traverses and climbing to the itinerary. Even so, it is not difficult to become lost in the New Zealand bush and close attention must be paid to navigation. Trip durations vary. Long tramps may last a week or more; others are only weekend excursions or "overnighters"; and day trips are also popular.

People usually tramp in small "parties" with a designated "leader", often simply the most experienced member or main organiser, for practical, safety, and social reasons. Most trips are undertaken by adults. But as a self-organised recreation, tramping can be configured in many ways, including solo, large group, family and school expeditions. Clubs have long helped provide a safe introduction to tramping for newcomers and a

platform for ongoing participation; most huts were originally built and maintained by clubs. Since the 1970s, however, club influence has declined and private tramping now predominates; most back-country facilities are maintained by the Department of Conservation (Maclean 1994:243).

The tramping experience

The New Zealand wilderness is a unique social milieu. Trampers encounter others on the track; huts are often occupied by multiple parties. "Club trips", too, in large organisations like the TTC, tend to feature unique combinations—mostly friends and acquaintances, but perhaps also newcomers and non-members—who must live together and cooperate under challenging conditions. This situation, one person noted, makes tramping unlike almost any other recreational activity:

Janet King: It's living together with people.... You go out in the bush, you do all those other things with people that are just basic things... walking... setting out your sleeping bag... helping to make the tea... chopping the wood... going to the loo... washing, you're doing *everything* with people, you're *living* with them. [A]

Tramping's combination of physical challenges and communal living helps explain certain core beliefs among trampers. Many people I interviewed, for example, cited the tenet, "Tramping is a great leveller". The act of living together in the wilderness "cuts everybody down to the same level". As one writer notes:

> Tramping is a great social leveller; company directors and street cleaners alike share a unique sense of companionship through their common adventures and experiences away from expectations and increasing pressures of city life. The bush has its own social rules. (Mason 1994:73)

A shared tramping culture has also developed over the years, including knowledge of practical skills, gear, and food, and bush narratives. Tramping has its own vocabulary, too, including terms like "billy" (cooking pot), "scroggin" (energy food), and "boulder-hopping" (a technique for crossing boulder-strewn terrain). Of course, the activity's name—"tramping"—is distinctive and has long been cherished for this reason. Even by the early-1930s, trampers preferred it to "hiking" (e.g., *TT* 4/1933), with a later article posing a crucial rhetorical question:

> What other word could we use? Rambling, hiking, wanderlust, walking and bushwalkers' clubs are foreign terms to us…. Some words sound feeble when we think of struggling through gorges, route-finding in bush, pushing through alpine scrub, of fogs and icy blasts on the tops, and of the weighty packs. After nearly forty years the [TTC] has helped to give, if not a new meaning, at least a new flavour to *tramping* and *tramper*. (Mason 1958:29)

This passage also reveals the sense of pride which tramping experiences engender. For many trampers, the activity's meaningfulness is bound up in adventuresome deeds transcending everyday activities. As a second often-heard tramping tenet puts it: "The worst trips are the most memorable" (see below for a third tenet). Arduous terrain and uncomfortable conditions tend to enhance later feelings of achievement, however gruelling at the time. As Andy Andersen observed: "If the hills were a walkover, what were you doing it for" (interview C). Such philosophies underpinned one person's explanations for why they liked tramping:

Chris Horne: Oh, it's the sharing of the experience of being tired, enjoying views, coping with bad weather… discomfort, all together and being inventive and prepared to adapt yourself to whatever Mother Nature throws at you.

Tramping has many other satisfactions also: camaraderie and friendship; the study of nature; fitness; exploration; and the gaining of self-knowledge. For some people I interviewed, tramping had a spiritual dimension. "A lot of trampers have a very close relationship with the mountains", Wayne Griffen observed. "If I couldn't get into the bush once a week, I'd probably be in a bad way" (interview). As we shall see, the post-WWII singsong culture in Wellington clubs was strongly informed by these perennial attractions of tramping.

The development of Wellington tramping

The city of Wellington is situated on a large harbour at the southern tip of the North Island of New Zealand. The location has many natural advantages and was occupied by various Māori tribes prior to British colonisation commencing in the 1840s (see more Chapter 7). Named after the Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, the city has been the capital of New Zealand since 1865 and, consequently, has long been dominated by

the presence of Parliament and central government departments, packed into a compact CBD near the waterfront. Residential suburbs occupy the hills and valleys surrounding the city centre. In 1936, just prior to the period covered in this study, Wellington city had 115,705 residents (Census and Statistics Department 1937), almost all of whom were Pākehā New Zealanders. The larger Wellington urban area also encompasses smaller cities to the north in the Hutt Valley and Porirua basin.

That Wellington was the birthplace of club tramping in New Zealand is unsurprising. Among the main New Zealand centres, it is unique for being situated near two mountain ranges. The Rimutaka Range appears as a series of long uneven ridges east of Wellington Harbour. The more substantial Tararua Range loom as a distant mass to north, often snow-capped in winter (see Plate 4). Several interviewees who grew up in Wellington recalled the beckoning appeal of these peaks from their 1930s childhoods. Indeed, to some extent, the city's own hilly terrain and windy climate primes locals for tramping.

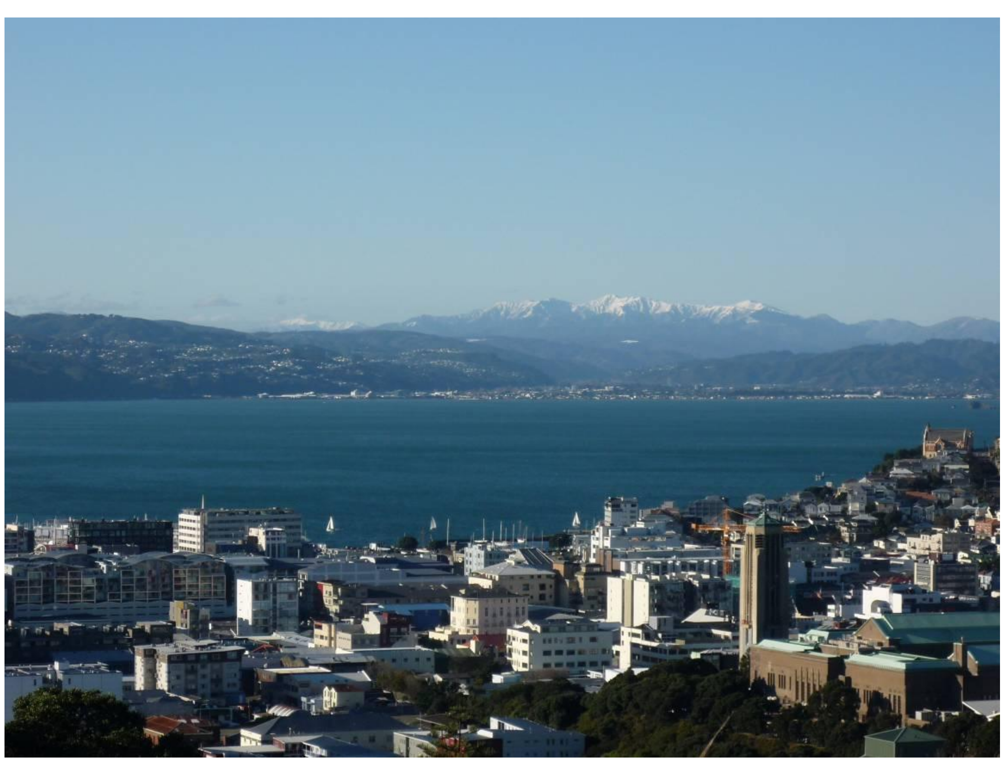

Plate 4: **Tararua Range from Wellington**

Michael Brown

The Tararua Range is the main mountain chain of the lower North Island, “Tararua” being the traditional Māori name referring to “two peaks” near Otaki (Reed and Dowling 2010:389). It consists of a series of long ranges stretching from the Hutt Valley to the Manawatu Gorge in the north, with a total area of over 3000 square kilometres. Trampers were among those who helped chart its geography in the 1920s, cutting tracks through the bush and constructing shelters (Greig 1946:24-37). The “Southern Crossing” along the highest peaks seen from Wellington was soon established as a preeminent route (see Figure 1).

The Tararua Range has a deserved reputation for extreme weather. Due to its exposed position in relation to Cook Strait—lying between the North and South Islands of New Zealand—the tops are cloudless for an average of only eighty days a year (Maclean 1994:36). Judging the concomitant risks can be difficult and dozens of fatalities have occurred since the 1920s. During the research period for this study in 2008-2009, two people perished of hypothermia in a Tararua snowstorm (while another died in the Rimutaka Range). Yet the ranges offer rich tramping opportunities and are visited by 120,000-150,000 people per year (21-22). The lack of sandflies, such as plague South Island mountains, is another positive feature.

The Rimutaka Range has a rather different recreational history. The central Orongorongo valley is only a short distance from the harbour suburb of Eastbourne and, from the 1910s onwards, became host to dozens of small shelters. Mostly built from second-hand materials carried into the valley, they were given colourful names like Pork Villa and Biscuit-Tin Hut (Kerr 2006:57-58). Their builders included trampers, nearby residents, possum trappers and hunters, some of whom led a semi-subsistence existence in the valley during the Depression. Building of further huts was stopped in the mid-1970s, with surviving examples since being identified as a form of New Zealand “vernacular architecture” (Drummond 1990).

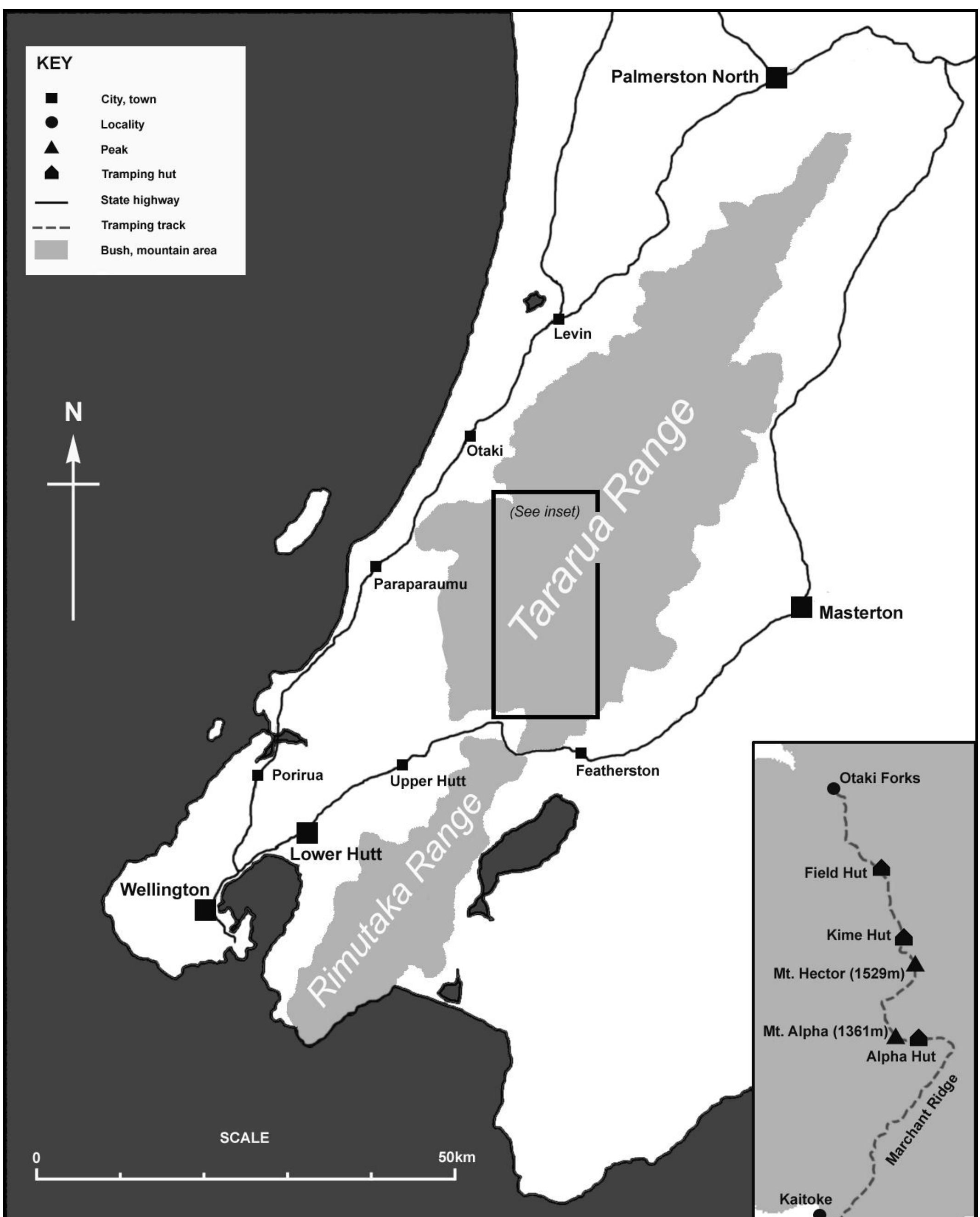

Figure 1: **Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges**

Inset map shows the "Southern Crossing" route.

The clothing and gear used by early Wellington trampers reflected a similar "make your own" style. Tony Nolan, who joined the TTC in the late-1930s and would write many club songs, describes in a memoir how

> Many people had to make their own packs, tents and sleeping bags, or sleep in a blanket, for the cost of proper equipment was beyond them. Billies were frequently

> treacle tins fitted with wire handles. For clothing, the men usually wore old flannel shirts and football jerseys, with old patched trousers, cut-down slacks or football shorts… [and] although some women wore knickerbockers, most... adopted shorts, sometimes under cover of gym skirts…. Slickers, sou-westers, groundsheets, sleeping bag covers, and waterproof food bags, all had to be re-oiled frequently with linseed oil.... Since boots were also oiled… trampers of those days emitted a distinctly oily odour. Packs were almost without exception of the frameless "kidney-rotter" kind. Like many others, my first was made of sacking sewn up on a sewing machine, my second being also home-made but of oiled japara…. In those needy days, boots, shoes and socks were worn to disintegration, so that road-ends and track-sides were often littered with them. ('Orongorongo memories' typescript, TTC archives)

There was also little specialised food, freeze-dried rations only becoming available in the late-1950s, and it was not uncommon for trampers to carry rifles to obtain venison or pork. Fortifying snacks called "Tararua biscuits" were also invented. During these formative decades, then, due to economic constraints, lack of commercial products, and an absence of official oversight in the bush, going tramping encouraged a vernacular approach.

Clubs had a major role in the development of Wellington tramping. After the founding of the TTC in 1919, over a dozen other local organisations were formed within thirty years, some short-lived, others more enduring. Club tramping had numerous advantages, allowing members to share practical knowledge, gear, and transport, organise track cutting and hut construction. Clubs were also crucial in imparting legitimacy to tramping while it was still seeking public acceptance. The wider tramping milieu encompassed private trampers, hunters, deer cullers, scouts, cadets, and school groups—all of whom had full access to club-built huts (see Plate 5 for an early hut).

These tramping clubs can be considered "interest communities" formed around a shared recreation (cf. Martin 2001). Each comprised a small social network of friends and acquaintances, which congregated at sites of community, and shared markers of identity like emblems and club nicknames. They thus provided a classic community context in which the vernacular could emerge in ancillary social activities like music-making (cf. Pickering and Green 1987b:7-12), members feeling "at home" in each other's company.

The clubs also had their own "idiocultures", a term Gary Alan Fine uses to describe the distinct interactional cultures of small groups, like sports teams, operating within a broader field of activity (1979). Tramping clubs had different organisational styles and social traditions, including in their music-making. The TTC and VUCTC, as will be discussed in the next chapter, each developed a distinctive "singsong idioculture".

Plate 5: **Powell Hut, 1941**
VUCTC records, Victoria University of Wellington library

The "interest communities" of Wellington tramping clubs also had several other important features. Most had—and still have—a largely adult membership. Due to the arduousness and risks of tramping, clubs were understandably reluctant to encourage children on general trips, although some cultivated a family-orientated side. Tramping clubs have also been shaped and strengthened by aspects of Wellington demography. While the city has a core of permanent residents, a large portion of the population at any one time will have moved there to work in the public service, private sector, or to study (Farland 1970). Organisations like tramping clubs have thus been able to provide some migrants with what Chris Maclean describes as "a ready-made social world", where one can meet people, make friendships, and perhaps even find a conjugal partner (1994:166). Some people I interviewed were expatriate British and Irish migrants who found outfits like the TTC became a kind of "family" in the 1960s. Lastly, due to

Wellington's relatively small pre-1960s Māori population, tramping clubs became established as largely Pākehā communities.

During WWII, the Wellington tramping scene was curtailed somewhat but after the War there was a major surge of activity lasting several decades. This newfound energy was partly related to the return of ex-servicemen keen to resume tramping (Maclean 1994:206). Around 100 members of the TTC—some twenty percent of the membership—served overseas (Greig 1946:92, 107),[3] returnees helping inspire a construction drive that saw nine new club huts constructed between 1946 and 1961, including a ski lodge on Mt. Ruapehu in the Tongariro National Park (Bartlett 1994). Each required a huge volunteer effort.

Changes in New Zealand society also contributed to the post-WWII tramping boom. In late-1945, the forty-hour working week—originally legislated for in 1936, but delayed by the War—was fully implemented. Previously, most workers were employed for forty-four hour weeks including Saturday mornings. Gaining a whole weekend's freedom instantly increased tramping possibilities and opened up the recreation to more people. "There is no doubt that tramping has become an outdoor pursuit of considerable proportions", local newspapers were soon reporting (*The Evening Post*, 17/5/1946, p.10). An important corollary was a gradual rise in the number of women tramping in these decades. Improved transport was another encouraging factor. Small trucks had been chartered to get to the mountains since the mid-1930s, but a club-subsidised system was established after WWII (Perry 1994:55), which meant that clubs remained the most convenient channel for Wellingtonians to go tramping until private car ownership became widespread in the 1960s.[4] The return of the ex-servicemen; the hut-building and truck system; the forty-hour week; and shifting gender patterns: these factors stimulated and shaped the singsong culture of the next twenty years, and will be revisited throughout this case study.

[3] Eight were killed and six wounded.
[4] The lifting of long-distance travel restrictions and petrol rationing after WWII were other encouraging factors; as were recent road upgrades that improved access to nearby ranges.

Two Wellington tramping clubs

From the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s, informal musical events known as "singsongs" were pervasive in Wellington tramping club life. Each club had its own distinctive singsong culture informed by their membership makeup, social traditions, organisation style, and general ethos. Before looking more closely at this singsong heyday, it is necessary to broadly describe the two clubs covered in this study: the TTC and VUCTC.

The **Tararua Tramping Club** was founded in 1919 by William Field, Member of Parliament for Otaki, and Fred Vosseler, a Wellington businessman. It is one of the largest New Zealand tramping clubs. In 1944, membership stood at almost 500 (Greig 1946:99) and, until 1970, fluctuated between around 450 and 610.[5] The membership also encompassed a wide span of age-groups, from young adults through to retirees (*TT* 4/1965), thus allowing for shared experiences and transmission of practical knowledge across several generations; some people belong to the TTC for many decades. Members are informally known as "Tararuas".

The TTC was highly organised from the start, with a constitution and regular meetings, being determined to turn tramping into a legitimate recreation. The club constructed the first of its many huts in the Tararua Range in 1921 (Bartlett 1994). Trips of varying difficulty were scheduled, with experienced members as leaders; some also branched out into climbing and skiing. By the mid-1940s, the TTC was offering expert instruction on many aspects of bush- and mountain-craft (Greig 1946:108). Social activity was also encouraged at weekly "club nights", initially in hired premises in downtown Wellington (Cross et al. 1946), before the club purchased its own clubrooms in 1961. Since 1928, a monthly newsletter, *Tararua Tramper*, has been published; and an annual journal, *Tararua,* since 1947.

In 1946, club historian B.D.A. Greig noted that "Business and professional men helped found the club and for years after were prominent in all club affairs" (1946:100). This founding generation were known for their conservative attitudes, favouring, for example, the presence of chaperones on mixed trips and thereby earning the TTC a reputation among other clubs for being "prim and proper". By the 1930s, however,

[5] See TTC annual reports (published with the July *Tararua Tramper*).

younger generations were dispensing with chaperones and one influential clique, proudly embracing the nickname "the Scum", became notorious for their irreverent attitudes (Maclean 1994:167).

The post-WWII membership comprised people with diverse occupations: "It was sort of a mixture", Bill Gates observed (interview), but given the nature of the Wellington workforce, it tended toward office workers and professionals. Here is a medley of interviews excerpts giving an impression of the club at this time:

> ***Frank Dement:*** I joined the Tararua Club in 1944… a group of us came back before the rest of the Third Division [of the New Zealand Army] and… worked a forty-hour week and the weekends were always free... to go tramping. ***John Gates:*** I joined 1945. There was a whole lot of fellas about my age.... A guy… gave Dad some photo albums and that really blew my mind: people tramping in snow and things like that—they appealed to me. ***Maurice Perry:*** That first weekend we took a truck up… behind Levin, walked into the old Ohau hut… over Girdlestone saddle into the Mangahao… I was hooked, I loved it! ***Andy Andersen:*** One of the big points… was the company. That was major. You like to try yourself out on the country, but the comradeship was a very big factor in it. [C] ***Pam Gates:*** Belonging to the tramping club… you know, I'd be physically exhausted on a Sunday night but mentally you'd been with other people... had interesting discussions… you could leave all your everyday life stuff behind and it was like another existence. ***Janet King:*** There was probably an unconscious desire to… go out in the bush. And I had contacts in the club... girlfriends that had come to Wellington... so that sort of gave me a bit of an "in". I could go along... and I knew somebody. It was great. [A]

Despite social events like the 1946 "Welcome home" party described at the opening of this chapter—and the rugged ambience of tramping itself—the TTC's "prim and proper" reputation persisted through the post-WWII era. And with some good reason: bunkrooms in the club's ski lodge (built in 1951), for instance, were kept segregated according to gender for many years. The TTC's standing as the oldest such organisation in New Zealand and one with an illustrious history, probably encouraged discretion in such matters.

The presence and role of women in the TTC was itself changing in the 1940s. In the early years, trip leadership and club officialdom had been mostly a male preserve. Some

men also regarded women trampers as less capable and overly interested in social activities (Ross 2002:56-57). These "he-man" attitudes were less pronounced in the TTC than other clubs,[6] though, and as women proved their worth as trampers, climbers, and organisers during the 1930s, their role in club affairs increased (Davidson 1946; Maclean 1994:163-165). The actual gender proportions in the TTC membership in the post-War period are difficult to determine,[7] but it seems certain that 1940s trips were still male-dominated: a member recalled tramps at this time as sometimes all-male or, at best, three men to every woman (Andy Andersen, interview C). Others observed that the balance had evened out by the 1960s.

The TTC has also long been perceived to operate like a "matrimonial agency" (Pascoe 1946:96). Indeed, one internal poll revealed that around one quarter of respondents had married another member (see *TT* 4/1965). The tendency is also apparent in other clubs, with some trampers marrying between clubs. This phenomenon demonstrates a third oft-heard tramping tenet, "You see people at their best and their worst while tramping": the activity allows for a realistic appraisal of potential partners.

The ***Victoria University College Tramping Club*** was founded in 1921 and presents many contrasts with the TTC, the membership mainly comprising young students at Victoria University College (Victoria University of Wellington, after 1961). It has a smaller and more transient membership than the TTC: between 1945 and 1968 membership averaged around eighty,[8] with participation levels varying considerably—most students had to work part-time to support themselves before bursaries were established in the early-1960s. The VUCTC also operated with minimal administration, never had a dedicated headquarters, and only sporadically published a "Tramping Club Newsletter" from 1946 (renamed *Heels* in 1951). But even if fewer in number, varsity trips were comparable in scope to those of mainstream clubs, with a major fixture of the post-War decades being a post-exams Christmas trip lasting a week or fortnight (Sissons 1971:9-12). Students even constructed a hut in 1948—Allaway-Dickson Hut in the

[6] The Canterbury Mountaineering Club, for example, did not admit female members until the early-1980s.
[7] Time constraints have prevented a full statistical analysis of club trip reports—which would not give an accurate picture in any case, as many non-member spouses, partners, and friends went on club trips.
[8] VUCTC records held in the Victoria University of Wellington library give figures ranging from 60 members (1945-1946; folder 31) to 117 members (1968; folder 37).

Tauherenikau valley—as a memorial to two members killed in the Southern Alps (see Plate 6). Here are three stories about joining the VUCTC around this time:

> ***Pip Piper:*** I didn't do much tramping as a kid... I think what drew me was when I went to Victoria.... I was pretty fit and I met all sorts of people that were like-minded from the Air Force... and... one of my supervisors… said, "You better come out with us next week"… it was a completely different challenge to what I'd been doing. ***Don Brown***: In the university there was a whole wall covered in club notices…. I was just interested in the tramping club… because it was a group activity, it was both sexes, and it was something you could choose to do when you wanted to…. The rewards were the companionship, the people you knew. You were in a strange city... looking around to find compatible groups you could join…. [A] ***Tony Somerset:*** There was no induction of any sort… the whole thing was incredibly casual…. I knew absolutely nothing about going into the mountains…. There were many motivations. Largely... you wanted to be a person that had a rounded set of skills... physical as well as cognitive… [and] it was a romantic urge to see around the next corner. The mountains became a kind of mystic place… secret things happened there in terms of self-growth.

The VUCTC was also more openly hedonistic compared with other clubs. Drinking parties at flats in Wellington and "bashes, or more explicitly alcoholic weekends" at Allaway-Dickson Hut were typical social occasions (Sissons 1971:17). Furthermore, the VUCTC was one of the few university student groups where male and female students could spend long periods together, "often in circumstances amenable to romantic intimacy" (Hamilton 2002:47). The club was consequently perceived in the Wellington tramping scene as rather "immoral" (Don Boswell, interview A), and some fellow students were apparently even deterred from joining (Beverly Price pers. comm. 13/6/2008).

While the club's reputation for social and sexual freedom was somewhat exaggerated, as we shall see, the VUCTC was unconventional. Women encountered less discrimination here, for example, with interviewees highlighting a spirit of competitive equality around physical achievement and in other areas:

> ***Mary Mowbray:*** You aspired to be like them [i.e. male trampers] and to get your fitness up to their standard. I think that, by and large, there was a measure of equality... not complete… there was still a 1950s feel of... deferring to the men in some degree, but then

> if there was an argument you gave as good as you got. There wasn't an overt put-down of women. ***Trevor Mowbray:*** I came out of a boys' school… [assuming] that all boys are basically brighter than girls, went to university and got some rude shocks…. Then we went tramping.... I realised most of the girls… were not only as fit as me, they were fitter than I was, the older ones! So I had to recast my thinking.

The able independence shown by ex-VUCTC female trampers in the clubs they afterwards joined, including the TTC, apparently helped women gain a greater role there (Greig 1946:70-71). While documentary evidence is lacking, men again probably predominated on varsity trips in the post-War period. Mary Mowbray, a former club secretary, estimates there was a 6:4 proportion of men to women in the mid-1950s.

Plate 6: **Allaway-Dickson Hut**
Sissons 1971

The VUCTC's difference from mainstream tramping clubs in Wellington was part of its identity and relished by members. Along with its moral notoriety and casual tramping approach, the varsity club stood out for the left-wing political leanings of many members, especially during the first post-WWII decade, when large numbers of ex-servicemen—many with a Marxist perspective hardened during the fight against Fascism—received rehabilitation loans for study and had a significant influence on student affairs (Barrowman 1999:98-99; Hamilton 2002:96-97). There was apparently considerable crossover with the membership of the Socialist Club until the mid-1950s.

After graduating, some ex-VUCTC members I interviewed had gone on to clubs like the TTC to further their interest; others maintained their independent stance to tramping.

Overview of the singsong heyday

During the 1940s-1960s period, singsongs were the predominant form of TTC and VUCTC music-making. Before discussing this heyday era, some clarification of the "singsong" format is useful. A "singsong" can be broadly defined as a session of informal group singing.[9] The term connotes a relatively small group, as opposed to a mass crowd situation. Open and inclusive participation is a defining characteristic: singsongs can be considered one of the most widespread forms of "participatory music" in Western societies (Turino 2008:28-51). Most people would have taken part at some time in a singsong—or a variation like a "singalong" (singing along to an accompaniment)[10]—such as at a social occasion or birthday party.

Because TTC and VUCTC singsongs were, by nature, spontaneous occasions which left no permanent record, it is challenging to give a clear-cut historical overview. Club publications provide some evidence of the pre-WWII period. During the 1920s and 1930s, singsongs were part of a range of music-making in the TTC. Social evenings might include amateur music items and vaudeville skits (e.g., see *TT* 10/1935), while "flannel dances"—so-called because attendees wore casual clothing epitomised by flannel trousers—were a clubroom staple during the Depression (Cross et al. 1946). Newsletters also report group singing at huts and campfires, and at clubroom and interclub events; early VUCTC reports mention singing, too. Some singing was semi-organised—as with a short-lived "Glee Club" formed in the TTC in 1929—but most events were fairly impromptu. Early TTC reports sometimes describe sessions as "community singing" and items as "community songs", in reference to a popular singing movement of the 1930s (see Brown 2008a). But "singsong", which first appeared in the *Tararua Tramper* in November 1929 and in a VUCTC report in 1931 (*The Spike*, 1931, p.95), soon became the customary term for this kind of music-making.

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[9] The *OED* gives the earliest citation for "singsong" as 1769, noting a gradual shift in meaning: "An amateur concert of an informal nature; a convivial meeting where each person is expected to contribute a song. Now more usu. a gathering for, or session of, community singing".

[10] "Singalong" was apparently coined in the late-1950s in connection with the various "singalong" LPs recorded by American producer Mitch Miller (*OED*).

While TTC and VUCTC singsongs entered their heyday period in the 1940s, some key developments occurred slightly earlier: the term "tramping song", for example, was first used in a TTC newsletter in August 1936, as the first classic tramping items were being written. By at least 1942-1943, the first tramping song books were being compiled within the TTC membership. But singsong activity was boosted greatly after WWII as part of the overall burgeoning of the Wellington tramping scene (see above). Significantly, other pre-War practices—e.g., clubroom dances and amateur vaudeville—were never revived to the same extent after the War. Singsongs became the main musical activity in both clubs.

Singsongs remained a major part of Wellington club tramping until at least mid-1960s. Their decline, again, can only be approximately dated and varied from club to club. By 1964, some TTC commentators were noting "a marked… falling off of singing" (Anon. 1964:83), yet this waning was actually fairly protracted. Singsongs continued at certain club events and among certain sub-groups for much longer and, even now, TTC reunions may include some singing. The slowness of this decline suggests several factors were involved, including changes in transportation (private cars replacing trucks in the 1960s), shifting generational tastes, and a wider decrease in participatory music-making in New Zealand, matters discussed in Chapter 5.

Main singsong situations

In all likelihood, thousands of TTC and VUCTC singsongs took place during the 1940s-1960s period. Some interviewees proposed there were two main types: "spontaneous ones that would happen just while you were away" and "annual events where there was always a singsong" (Dave Gobey, interview). Following this overall distinction, the following subsections explore the main singsong situations, along with the factors that helped configure them as vernacular domains, and their place within the tramping context. The final subsection discusses some general factors which contributed to the popularity of singing at this time.

Outward bound truck journeys

Truck singsongs figured large in the memories of those I interviewed—especially TTC members. The TTC ran literally hundreds of tramping trips, work parties, and ski weeks between 1945 and 1965, almost all of which began in the back of a truck leaving Wellington on a Friday night (see Plate 7). These trucks—used during the week for shifting furniture or coal—were chartered from carrier companies who converted them for passenger transit and provided drivers. Some had bench seating down each side (see Plate 8); others were decked with mattresses for long journeys. Most accommodated around twenty people. Here are some memories of the trucks:

> ***Graham Claridge:*** Some Friday nights there'd be two or three truckloads down at the Wellington Railway Station. Different clubs. ***Don Boswell:*** This guy called Charlie Free… used to sweep all the coal off the back of his truck-tray… pick you up… you all sat in the back of the truck and, particularly going over the Rimutakas, swaying round… [A] ***Janet King:*** If you were going into Otaki Forks… that was probably a couple of hours… probably too noisy to talk... but singing was something that could unite the whole group. There'd always people on the trips who knew the words… you wouldn't've carried song books or anything. [A] ***Chris Horne:*** There you are … you've been getting excited, packing your pack, and planning your weekend. There's a pretty electric atmosphere in the back of a vehicle like that… little wonder that we sang for hours… wiled away the time… ***Naomi Dement:*** I went up in the truck to Ruapehu—all this singing was going on! ...you get in there with your sleeping bag... everybody would be talking and then somebody would start a song and you'd all be singing… ***Maurice Perry:*** Singsongs seemed to be the natural way to occupy the time and some of the people had a marvellous repertoire…. It was a totally informal, impromptu thing. ***Frank Dement:*** They were off-the-cuff. One song would finish, someone else would start up one... ***Wayne Griffen:*** We'd have some wonderful singsongs and... a lot of other shenanigans...

Truck journeys, as descriptors like "informal" and "off-the-cuff" confirm, were implicitly treated as vernacular domains of social interaction. Their relaxed atmosphere was enhanced by Friday-night good spirits—people having just been released from work—and the occupation of a private partitioned area on a chartered vehicle. Here, people were freed from all immediate responsibilities. The resulting "shenanigans" were legendary: one TTC member apparently broke their leg in the ensuing rough and

tumble![11] (Dave Gobey, interview.) Singsongs, too, were infused with the same relaxed atmosphere, group singing being another form of self-entertainment to help fill the hours before reaching the road-end.

Singsongs also provided a diversion from anxieties that some people might have about what lay ahead. "It was always fairly tough on a Friday night landing at the end of the road in the dark… stumbling through the bush", Trevor Mowbray noted. "The beginning-trampers must've felt a bit of dread, as it were" (interview). If people were not well acquainted, singing also helped relieve any social reserve: "It breaks the ice a bit" (Don Boswell, interview B). Another tramper observed that group singing was useful for some people in limiting and simplifying social interaction:

Janet King: Some people are not necessarily good at talking to people, but singing it's sort of joining in a group thing, without putting yourself out in front or even talking to one other person… a lot of people don't find that easy… a lot of *younger* people. [A]

Plate 7: **TTC trampers, 1946**

TTC-songwriter Tony Nolan is seen here with ukulele. *John Rhodes*

[11] "Leaders are urged to see that parties refrain from wrestling and rough-and-tumble as driving with this going on in the back is definitely unsafe", a *Tararua Tramper* notice advised. "There is no objection to singing... however" (8/1946).

Plate 8: **TTC trampers, 1954**
TTC archives

Many interviewees also observed that the singsongs seemed to unite the tramping party. This feeling of group camaraderie can be regarded as what anthropologist Victor Turner calls *communitas*—"a generalized social bond" that arises in situations where social hierarchies are suspended or dissolved (1969:96). The informal, unstructured nature of the truck journeys probably encouraged the emergence of *communitas*, but these journeys represented the kind of classic "liminal" situation also identified by Turner as conducive, those where people find themselves "between" social roles. People were shrugging off their workplace selves on the trucks, leaving behind everyday rules, responsibilities, and markers of status, but not actually becoming "trampers" just yet. Perhaps the singsong also functioned as a "rehearsal" for the social dynamics of tramping itself—the "great leveller" which lay ahead (see chapter 4).

In the bush

The outward bound truck singsongs apparently had a musical "charging up" effect. "You had an hour... of singing in the truck, you refreshed your memory of the words to the songs", Maurice Perry told me. "So by Saturday night you're rearing to go" (interview). In the bush, singsongs mainly occurred in huts or at campsites after dinnertime tasks had been completed and before tiredness overcame the party. Many

people found open fires created an especially enchanting atmosphere for singing. Again, these were spontaneous sessions which began, ebbed, and flowed with the mood of the assembled company. Circumstances were sometimes unpropitious, though. If the day had been too exhausting, people might retire straight to bed. Long demanding tramps also seem to have featured less singing, as parties became engrossed in the mountain environment.

Bursts of group singing sometimes occurred on the track, too, whether to raise spirits or simply from the sheer euphoria of being footloose in the hills. “What do you do when you are feeling joyful? You sing”, Colin Dalziel declared (interview). People sang by themselves, too. According to one VUCTC account, somebody once walked up the Tauhereinikau valley on a hot day wearing just boots and hat, singing the refrain “I don’t care if it hails or freezes, I am safe in the arms of Jesus”! (John Ross, interview.) Track encounters with parties from other clubs were also a pretext for singing, particularly the vociferous chanting of an adaptation of ‘Ta-ra-ra boom-de-ay’. When a TTC party encountered a Hutt Valley Tramping Club party, for example, they might start chanting “Hutt Valley *scum*-de-ay! Hutt Valley *scum*-de-ay!”, repeated *ad libitum*, inevitably receiving the reply: “Tararua *scum*-de-ay! Tararua *scum*-de-ay!”. Sightings of distant parties could also prompt the ambiguous salutation: “Far call!”

Return truck journeys

The longest singsongs of the post-WWII heyday, according to many interviewees, took place on the return truck journeys to Wellington. Trips back from Mt. Ruapehu could take six or seven hours and be largely filled with singing (Anon. 1964:83). These had their own special atmosphere: any anxieties had long dissipated and people rested, savouring fresh memories, relieved to be heading home to hot running water and other civilised amenities. Such trips reversed the liminal phase of the outward-bound journeys, finding trampers slowly returning to thoughts of everyday life. The return singsongs, however, seem to have prolonged rather than dissolved group *communitas*. Some people recalled the abrupt “re-entry shock” of disembarking in downtown Wellington, hearing their hobnail boots clinking on the footpath, suddenly alert to the unusual spectacle they presented. “You’d go into a... milk bar… pile our packs there”,

Tony Somerset noted. “We were showing that we were ‘other people’… you were going to rejoin them, but not quite yet” (interview).

Such comments strongly suggest that the entire tramping trip was a kind of liminal rite of passage, where people separated from everyday life, engaging temporarily in another role, before reintegrating back into society. Or, more precisely, tramping exemplified a category of quasi-ritualistic activity that Victor Turner calls “liminoid phenomena” (1982:20-60). Whereas traditional rites of passage like weddings or graduation ceremonies may involve some “moral pressure” to participate, liminoid activities are optional supplements to life in modern societies, often recreational in nature, where people “play” with alternative roles and experiences, and which accrue highly personal meanings (53-55). Indeed, like Tony Somerset, other trampers recalled privately savouring the post-trip sensation that were living a “double life”. Brenda Neill remembered:

> Sometimes I’d be sitting at my desk on a Monday morning and there’d be scratches from where the top of my socks had been up to where the bottom of my shorts had been. I’d been away on some—perhaps quite hard—trip and I’d have that lovely feeling that I was living a double life, that here I was in my proper clothes at work behind a desk, but the day before I’d been struggling up rivers or cursing up mountains or crawling around on a ridge.... Just that wonderful knowledge. (from Brown and Perkins 2004)

Hut parties and bottle parties

Singsongs also occurred at tramping club events. Hut parties were one important setting. In the TTC, these included an annual “barn dance” at Tauherenikau Hut (see Plate 9), inaugurated with the 1946 “Welcome Home” party for returned serviceman and held until 1969—often in conjunction with a birthday party for Joe Gibbs, a bushman who built some of the club’s early huts (Maclean 1994:218). Hut openings also prompted parties and some TTC “hut birthdays” became annual fixtures, attended by seventy people or more, with dancing accompanied by a scratch band or sung refrains, and ending with a sit-down singsong. VUCTC “bashes” at Allaway-Dickson Hut also centred on singing.

Plate 9: **Tauherenikau barn dance, 1962**

Michael Brown

Party locations like Tauherenikau Hut and Allaway-Dickson Hut, were all easy walking distance from road-ends near Wellington. This enabled alcohol to be carried and consumed in copious quantities, unlike on ordinary tramping trips.[12] Drinking doubtless strengthened the vernacular domains of hut parties, any inhibitions being shed after a few glasses, and socialising and self-entertainment taking on an unpredictable quality. The hut setting was perhaps uniquely liberating, though. Consideration did not have to be made for sleeping next door neighbours, while the roughness of huts—able to handle a few knocks and scrapes—encouraged exuberant dancing and games. TTC members also held singsongs at their isolated ski lodge high on Mt. Ruapehu (see Plate 10).

For VUCTC members and their wider student circle, "bottle parties" held in Wellington flats were another prime singsong setting. Until 1967, hotel bars were required to close at six o'clock and parties to which people brought bottles or flagons of liquor were a major format for socialising in the post-WWII period. (A typical "bottle party" including singsong is depicted in Peter Cape's early-1960s song, 'Charlie's bash': Steele 2001:79.) TTC "club nights" also included occasional singsongs around a clubroom piano acquired for dancing and singing purposes.

[12] Due to weight and, in the TTC, club policy (Pam Gates, interview).

Plate 10: **Singsong at Tararua Hut**
TTC archives

Interclub gatherings

Singsongs also took place at Wellington interclub gatherings. While run independently, the Wellington clubs comprised a wider scene that involved “free use of one another’s huts… intermingling on trips… sports meetings... dances” (Greig 1946:101). The Combined Clubs Sports Meeting, held annually from 1929 until 1995 over a weekend at the Catchpool Stream near the Rimutaka Range (Jagger [1997]), was the key interclub fixture for singing. On the Saturday, athletic contests would be held followed by an evening bonfire gathering of upwards of 150 attendees in a natural amphitheatre (see Plate 11). Clubs took turns each year in organising evening entertainment led by an MC, including prize-giving, solo and club singing items, and general bonfire singing for which song sheets were distributed. These “singsongs” were rather more formalised than those discussed above, but still retained considerable spontaneity. Several people recalled groups trading impromptu “scum-de-ay” variations around the fire, for instance, like fans taunting each other at football matches. Once the bonfire programme was finished, smaller singsongs would be held at club campfires nearby.

Plate 11: **Sports Meeting bonfire, 1944**
TTC archives

Other stimuli for informal singing

In retrospect, the degree to which singsongs pervaded Wellington tramping club life in the post-WWII decades is striking. Singing took place on trucks and tramping trips, at club and interclub events, and at reunions and parties in town. It was obviously a familiar and accessible form of self-entertainment. This subsection looks at the broader music culture of mid-twentieth century New Zealand and several other encouraging factors.

Like most New Zealanders at this time, a range of common musical experiences made post-War trampers in these clubs comfortable with the act of participatory group singing. Domestic music-making was common in the early-twentieth century (cf. MacGibbon 2007:45), for instance, and several interviewees observed that it remained a familiar childhood experience during the 1930s:

> ***Kath Offer:*** Well, people did have pianos and... used to sing, because there was no television... so what did people do for a bit of light entertainment? They would go to the pictures... or they would have singsongs at home. ***Maurice Perry:*** Mum played the piano, Dad played the cello—long before any television or tape recorders. Quite often as youngsters, a Sunday night at home was sitting around the piano having a singsong.... So

> when I... started tramping and there is a group of people... in a truck together and someone would start singing, to me it was totally natural to join in.

The large number of pianos imported into New Zealand between 1878 and 1930—almost 138,000 in a country with a 1936 population of only 1.5 million—provides strong statistical confirmation for this prevalence of homemade music.[13]

Other key venues for participatory singing were school, church, and public events. Singing was made a compulsory subject in primary schools in 1904, with the *Dominion Song Book* series (1930-1952), being widely used at secondary level to teach part singing (Thomson 1991:268-270); singing also occurred at daily school assemblies in most schools. Congregational singing at church services was another ubiquitous experience. Although religious attendance was slowly declining, hymn singing remained until the 1940s—as Allan Thomas puts it—"one of the great 'folk' musics known by an overwhelming proportion of the population" (2002:84). Public occasions like community concerts and charity galas often included "chorus songs", too, in which everybody present joined in; 'Auld lang syne' was a typical final item. Municipal community singing, which attracted thousands to weekly sessions during the 1930s Depression, also testified to people's basic familiarity with participatory singing and further reinforced it (Brown 2008a).

This backdrop of common musical experiences supported trampers' informal singing, furnishing a repertoire of evergreens, popular songs, and hymns shared, more or less, by everybody, together with various "grown into" musical competencies (i.e. basic harmony singing). Other contemporaneous groups with their own distinctive singsong cultures included boy scouts and girl guides, university students, and soldiers, many of whose songs found their way into the tramping repertoire, along with drinking ditties and other party material (see next chapter).

The broader culture of participatory music remained strong in New Zealand at the start of the tramping singsong heyday in the early-1940s, but was beginning to decline. Several interviewees born around this time, for instance, experienced no domestic

[13] David Murray notes that nearly 100,000 pianos were imported between 1878 and 1914 (2008:51); see Appendix 5 for later import figures.

music-making in childhood: radios or gramophones were exclusively used to provide music. That these people were drawn into tramping sessions with relative ease, however, attests to the format's basic accessibility. Singsongs are a simple kind of music-making, requiring no more than some willing participants, familiar songs, and the right opportunity. People also found tramping singsongs inherently enjoyable. "We sang because we wanted to", one person emphasised (from Brown and Perkins 2004). Another observed:

Janet King: There would've been very few people who didn't join in…. I think people enjoy singing, particularly in an informal, friendly atmosphere… I don't know what it is… why do I enjoy singing? It's funny. It must release some form of relaxation or happiness.... [A]

That the majority of tramping singsongs were not set aside as special events, instead being a self-entertainment option taken up in the interstices of the tramping trip structure "to occupy the time" or as an after-dinner relaxation, is also significant. Embedded in a non-musical recreational activity, singsongs came with few "musical" expectations—of the kind attached to more formalised or named music-making (like the 1929 TTC "Glee Club")—that might inhibit people from participating. Singing was not the main pretext for being in the bush. Participants were "trampers" not "singers". As an informal adjunct to the main business of tramping, then, singsongs were inherently "music without musicians" (cf. Rudofsky 1964).

These factors also help explain the fairly muted sense, at least among people I interviewed, that tramping singsongs had comprised a musical "tradition" *per se*. Tramping was the principal interest binding the club communities together and, aside from a few annual events where singsongs were officially incorporated, there was no scheduled time exclusively set aside for and devoted to singing. Ultimately, the apparent disinclination to give singsongs a more permanent standing probably contributed to their relatively short, twenty to thirty year, heyday in the TTC and VUCTC. These points will be discussed further in Chapter 5 in regard to the singsong culture's main gesture toward "traditionalization"—club song books.

Summary

This chapter has presented some context for understanding the singsong cultures of two Wellington tramping clubs, the TTC and VUCTC. It has described the basic format of tramping and the tramping scene of early-twentieth century Wellington, together with the two clubs of interest during the 1940s-1960s singsong heyday. We have seen that music-making was part of club life from the 1920s with singsongs becoming the predominant format by the 1940s. In parallel with a wider burgeoning in Wellington tramping stimulated by the return of ex-servicemen from the war, increased leisure time, and club projects, the singsong culture flourished until the mid-1960s and then began to slowly decline.

The chapter has shown that the simplicity of the singsong format enabled it to be adapted to various settings. In each case, the singsong was implicitly treated as a vernacular domain: truck sessions were markedly casual; hut and campfire singing emerged on an impromptu basis; hut parties were frequently uproarious occasions; and even large interclub gatherings were inherently relaxed. Crucially, this music was part of the socialising in small communities—a classic social context for the vernacular identified by writers like Pickering and Green (1987b)—where members would feel "at home" with each other. The vernacular was also encouraged by other factors, including weekend high spirits; the informal ambience of tramping itself; and drinking in party contexts. Less obviously, an informal approach was encouraged by the singsongs being integrated into a non-musical recreational activity, rather than being set aside as special "musical" occasions or as a consciously-maintained "tradition".

The chapter has also discussed certain key subtexts of tramping singsongs during the post-WWII heyday in Wellington. Two important settings—the outward-bound and return truck journeys—have been identified as liminal phases in a tramping trip structure, whereby people transitioned from everyday life to being "trampers" and then back again. A strong sense of *communitas* accompanied these transitions and was strengthened by group singing. Tramping itself can be recognised as a liminoid activity, a temporary quasi-ritualistic excursion into a primitive mode of communal survival, which trampers value for its satisfying contrast to workaday urban life. The contrasting nature of the TTC and VUCTC during the post-War era has been highlighted, too: the

TTC was a large, diverse, and well-organised outfit with a somewhat conservative reputation; the VUCTC was a small student club with a more unconventional, daredevil character. The next chapter will look at how the vernacular enabled trampers to shape singsongs to suit their respective clubs and express the more general values of tramping. Chapter 5 will examine the historical factors that stimulated the post-War tramping scene, within which singing was such a satisfying component.

Chapter 4
The "singsong"

A dozen men and women turn in a circle raucously chanting—"I feel I feel I feel I feel I feel like a morning star!"—*swinging hands up together with a joyous whoop*—"Shoo fly! Don't bother me!" *Others sing along, happily drumming on table tops with hands and bottles. Almost a hundred trampers are crammed into Field Hut on Saturday night, 2 November 1974, at Tararua Tramping Club celebrations for the hut's fiftieth anniversary. An open fire and candles cast flickering light across the throng and the rough interior of the small hut. In the air is a mingled aroma of wood smoke, alcohol and, beneath it all, the musty fragrance of the bush outside in the dark night. Club members and well-wishers squeeze into corners, perch on benches and window sills; catch up with conversation and stories. Whistles and roars of laughter constantly pierce the din. "Like a whiskey?" "Love one thanks!" Eye to eye, some trampers are belting through another number*—"Oh when the saints... go marching in!"—*voices in and out of time. A guitar joins in from across the hut, before singing segues into an impromptu knees-up chant:* "Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!" *Song follows song, risqué classics like 'The keyhole in the door' and club favourites like 'The Waiatoto'*—"The hordes of mosquitos were there in their scores, the bloody big black ones with bloody big jaws... oh the Waiatoto! Why people go there I never will know..."—*then the TTC anthem, 'The Tararua ranges', club members relishing verse after irreverent verse, until—impromptu—the final chorus accelerates to high speed and the song climaxes. Festivities continue past midnight, the ballads gradually slowing and the singing softening. Cups of tea come out and the firelight dims to a heap of glowing embers beneath the blackened billies.*

Throughout the 1940s-1960s period, informal singsongs were a popular form of self-entertainment in the Tararua Tramping Club and Victoria University College Tramping Club. The ethnographic description given above, reconstructed from a tape recording made and narrated by TTC member Maurice Perry (see CD1), attempts to evoke these singsongs at their most raucous and exuberant. This chapter discusses TTC and VUCTC singsongs as "performance events", using the accumulated evidence to describe their

various components. It concentrates on the most common form: spontaneous group sessions in trucks, huts, and around campfires.

The chapter begins with a discussion of repertoire—including the main categories ("public", "latent", and tramping/mountaineering/skiing-related)—then looks at singsong performance dynamics. It then examines performance features like vocal styles and use of instruments, before turning to song-making and the main themes of club songs. Overall, the chapter shows how the vernacular enabled these trampers to shape their music-making to suit central performance goals, group dynamics, and club-specific interests, and allowed the singing of bawdy songs—mainly known by men—to be actively negotiated at a time when more women were taking up tramping.

Repertoire

Songs were the primary musical unit of TTC and VUCTC singsongs. Evidently, each club had a vast repertoire. "I've been on trucks coming back from Ruapehu: seven hours and no repetitions", Andy Andersen told me: "It was a point of honour not to repeat yourself" (interview C). Despite their informal nature, a surprisingly large portion of the club repertoires from these events have been recovered for this study: Appendix 2 lists 573 songs from TTC sources (1942-1971); and Appendix 2 lists 342 songs from VUCTC sources (1946-1968). While these collations must be approached with care—they are not all-inclusive, include some rarely-performed items, and cover fairly long timeframes—they are derived from a diverse range of sources (including song books, interviews, recordings, and archival manuscripts: see Appendices) and can be considered broadly representative of the post-WWII repertoires. The following subsections examine these repertoires from three perspectives: song categories and sources; learning processes; and club-specific emphases.

Song categories and sources

The tramping club repertoires can be broadly divided into three categories. First, there was what might be called a "public" repertoire. This comprised material available to most New Zealanders at this time through public media like sheet music, radio, movies, and sound recordings; and pan-societal music practices like domestic, church, and

school singing. Such songs are particularly well-represented in a ca.1943 TTC compilation, *Tararua Song Book* (see Plate 12), which overlaps considerably with the repertoire of 1930s community singing. Of its 155 song texts, around ninety percent are either contemporaneous popular songs or core "community songs", such as evergreens, rounds, sea shanties, WWI songs, and hymns.

Throughout the post-WWII period, singsongs continued to incorporate new "public" repertoire, including items from the latest Hollywood musicals, folk revival ballads, and songs by recording artists like Tom Lehrer and The Beatles. Although the incidence of this material differed within the TTC and VUCTC, it served as common ground at all singsongs, providing newcomers with participatory entry points, as well as grist for parody and tune borrowing.

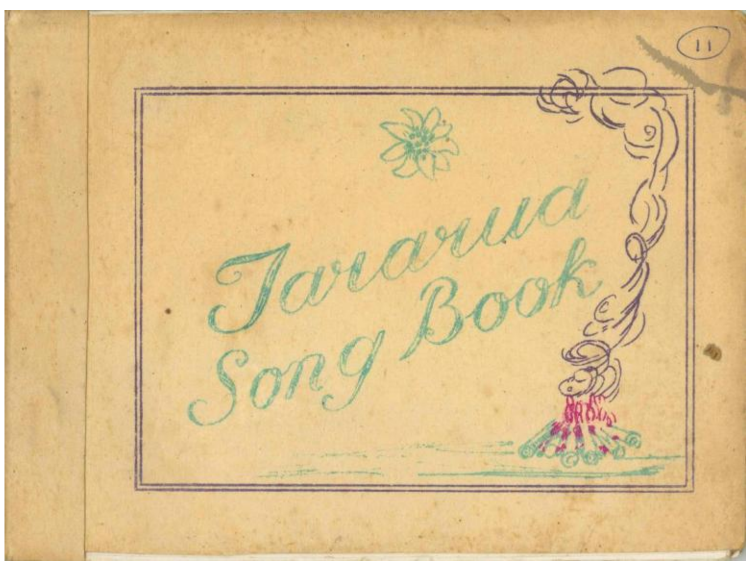

Plate 12: **'Tararua song book', ca.1943**

TTC archives

The second major category of the club repertoires will here be called "latent" material. Such songs circulated largely through oral or ephemeral print means, and were distributed more unevenly across New Zealand society, often being limited to specific groups. Partly because these songs tended to be transmitted without authorial ascription, they were inherently more subject to "vernacular textuality" (Atkinson 2004) than the "public" repertoire, acquiring variants, and being freely adapted and localised. Such material has sometimes been called "vernacular song" (e.g., Gammon 2008), but

because this thesis does not use product-based definitions of "vernacular"—see Chapter 1—the term "latent" is used to draw attention to the fact these songs are often carried in memory, generally hidden from public view, and in a state of ongoing change.

Much of the "latent" tramping repertoire originated with other groups to which trampers belonged or had contact with. VUCTC singsongs, for example, included Victoria student numbers like 'Up the hill'* or "extrav" items, like 'Rollo the ravaging Roman'*. More widely-shared crossovers include items sourced from the campfire singing of boy scouts (e.g., 'Ging gang goolie'*), girl guides, and other youth movements, many of which had large followings at this time.[1] Other groups whose songs entered the tramping repertoire include left-wing radicals, rugby players, and deer cullers; a few Māori party songs were also sung. The tramping repertoire, even in these two clubs, thus provides a kind of index of other informal singsong cultures in New Zealand at this time.

Many trampers also identified ex-servicemen as a key source of "latent" repertoire. Among the crossover material were service parodies (e.g., 'King Farouk'*) and Anglo-American bawdy songs (e.g., 'The good ship *Venus*'*, 'With his bloody great kidney wiper'*), which have mainly circulated orally among male groups like soldiers (see Cray 1992; Legman 1970 [1964]). Bawdy material was performed at tramping singsongs from at least the 1930s (see *The Spike*, 10/1930, p.52; *TT* 1/1940), but the circumstances of wartime mobilisation undoubtedly facilitated its post-War spread into the clubs. Many interviewees identified the most outrageous items as "army songs" or "soldier's songs".

Other "latent" material was more widespread and partly overlapped with "public" repertoire. 'Show me the way to go home'*, for instance, was originally a 1920s popular song but by the mid-twentieth century had become a party favourite with standard parody verses. Through being orally-transmitted on a mass scale, such songs became what Angela Annabell describes as "*vox populi*": they were "owned" by people generally (1975:414-415). Another example might be the well-known "dismantled bride" parody of Charles Harris' 'After the ball'*.

[1] In 1965, membership of such groups (see Millar et al. 1966) comprised 16.9% of New Zealanders aged between five and fifteen.

The third major category of the tramping singsong repertoire was songs about tramping, along with two other outdoor pursuits popular in the clubs: mountaineering and skiing. The first group of items were often called “tramping songs”, but as this term was also applied more broadly (see Chapter 5), they are here called “tramping-related” or something similar. Like other “latent” repertoire, these songs included many parodies, adaptations, and borrowed tunes. Some were written by VUCTC or TTC members; others originated elsewhere. As one person observed, songs were sometimes swapped in the bush or spread as people moved around the country:

Andy Andersen: People did shift; got transferred…. There were quite a lot of trampers in the Canterbury Mountaineering Club… and they picked up songs there and brought those to Wellington… Wellington ones went the other way too. [A]

Certain items originated outside New Zealand. British mountaineering songs like ‘The barroom mountaineers’*, for instance, were brought by migrants or learned by New Zealanders overseas. Others were possibly gleaned from outdoor-recreation song books. Several American skiing songs, for example, were probably taken from a compilation owned by several people I interviewed: *The New Song Fest* (Best and Best 1955). The tramping repertoire thus provides glimpses of an international culture of outdoor recreational singing which has received relatively little scholarly attention.

On the broadest level, then, the TTC and VUCTC repertoires both had the “hodgepodge” anything-goes quality that has been associated with the vernacular (Kodish 1983; Pickering and Green 1987b). They show varied song resources being freely accessed for their use value as a kind of “commons”, with the substantial presence of “latent” material showing the eclectic options available in adult music-making taking place far from the public eye. Nonetheless, the tramping repertoire was restricted in certain ways. Aside from a smattering of *lieder* and operatic arias (e.g., ‘La donna è mobile’), most songs have simple melodies. One also finds certain robust tunes, notably ‘John Brown’s body’, being frequented borrowed. The singsong repertoires, then, reflected the practical limitations of singsongs which usually had no instrumental accompaniment or trained singers. Both club repertoires were also marked by an emphasis on humorous content. Around three-quarters of songs in the TTC’s *Tararua*

Song Book (Anon. 1971), for instance, have a comic slant. While serious and sentimental material was also performed, humour fulfilled a major singsong goal: "having fun" (see below).

"Picking up songs"

While some singsong repertoire was already known through other musical experiences, people informed me that they learned many items on tramping trips—some were apparently never heard outside the tramping context. Learning was mostly by ear during singsongs:

> ***Don Brown:*** It wasn't a tedious... pedantic thing of... looking at song books. In fact, it was regarded as being very *infra dig* [in the VUCTC] to look at a song book... you had to pick up the words in the singsong... that line and... that line and... the chorus and away it went. [A] ***Chris Horne:*** Some people will join in on the chorus... hum their way through the verses... and… from time to time groups would go through a second time to help the people who were learning.... ***Maurice Perry:*** Whether people knew the words or not, the words seemed to very quickly rub off.... so that by the *next trip* those people had picked up the words to that song.

"Picking up the words" was part of the overall induction of new members into club life, paralleling the process of befriending others, acquiring outdoor skills, and building an identification with the club. As one interviewee explained:

> ***Trevor Mowbray:*** I think when you first started out you'd be... thinking, "oh, I must join in, so as not to look like a piker"... they would sing 'Loch Lomond' and you'd think, "I remember singing that at primary school".... They'd sing a [tramping] song and, of course, you hadn't a clue... you could call it an initiation rite if you wanted to: part of becoming the group was to learn the words to the songs.

This initiatory imperative helps account for why words so quickly "rubbed off": songs had symbolic value. "If you know all these songs", Don Brown explained, "it's a passport to be stamped as a *bona fide* member of a group" (interview B). Songs about tramping were particularly significant, a kind of knowledge restricted to trampers. "They were exclusive... just kind of yours", one remarked (from Brown and Perkins 2004).

While having only a minor role at singsongs, some interviewees had owned song books for "brushing up" on lyrics at home or during trips. Such reference aids began to be produced by TTC members in the early-1940s, although only in small runs: an official compilation was not produced until 1971. Compilations owned among VUCTC members included student collections, the left-wing *Kiwi Youth Sings* (Bollinger and Grange 1951), and a mimeographed bawdy anthology, 'Fester' (1967). Some students carried the learning impulse further by collecting items in notebooks and creating private typescripts. Lastly, as noted already, several interviewees owned overseas song books from which they sourced appropriate material.

Club repertoires

The TTC and VUCTC singsong repertoires—like the clubs themselves—differed in many ways. Indeed, only 158 songs are found in both club collations, about twenty percent of the combined total. This basic disparity suggests that repertoire formation should be considered a making-our-own process by which clubs expressed a sense of what "our" songs were: it shows "chosen material being brought together to give identity and definition" (Pickering and Green 1987b:12). Repertoire is the area in which the singsong cultures of the two tramping clubs can be most clearly distinguished from each other.

The VUCTC corpus illustrates the repertoire customisation process in a number of ways. Bawdy songs, for instance, were identified by both interviewees and commentators (Sissons 1971:16) as a significant genre during the 1940s-1960s heyday and they comprise 29.5 percent of the recovered material. What is here referred to as "bawdy" encompasses songs with explicit sexual or scatological content; euphemistic "teasing songs" on such topics (see Cray 1992:256); coarse satires of religious, family, or moral values; and items featuring swearwords. Such material had a wider popularity in tramping clubs (see below), but it especially appealed to students for several reasons.

First, the VUCTC primarily comprised young men and women, mostly sexually inexperienced and living away from home for the first time, who were understandably receptive to songs with sexual content. Their curiosity was perhaps also piqued by the

moral conservatism of New Zealand in the post-WWII decades. Radio broadcasting, for example, was strictly monitored at this time with songs ranging from the lightly-suggestive 'The foggy foggy dew' through to saucy American show tunes (e.g., 'Too darn hot') banned by government broadcasting agencies. "Consistent wholesomeness of programmes" was seen as an official objective (Yska 1993:138; cf. Bourke 2010:263-265). Bawdy songs thus provided special access to content suppressed in mass culture. Second, the broader spectrum of ribald material probably supported VUCTC trampers' self-image as a rebel group outside mainstream society (see previous chapter). The wittiness, parodic skill, and ingenious rhymes of many items also held a special attraction for university students sharpening their intellectual faculties. Several ex-students I interviewed felt that sharp humour made almost any song acceptable.

Left-wing songs—although comprising only 6.5 percent of the recovered material—were considered equally iconic in the VUCTC in the 1945 to mid-1950s period. What is here referred to as "left-wing" includes socialist anthems (e.g., 'Bandierra rossa'[*]), Spanish Civil War (e.g., 'The four insurgent generals'[*]) and Italian partisan songs (e.g., 'E le stellette'[*]), and satirical student numbers (e.g., 'Serge and I'[*]). These items served the crossover interest of the VUCTC/Socialist Club memberships, celebrating ideals that members were applying through street demonstrations and illegal pro-union activities (Bollinger 1957; Hamilton 2002:105-106). Even for student trampers with less definite political views, left-wing material—like ribaldry—was a badge of rebellion in a country that was closely aligning itself with the United States during the Cold War (King 2003:422-425). Significantly, though, VUCTC singsongs also included items satirising left-wing rhetoric: one ditty featured the couplet, "The working class can kiss my arse/I got the foreman's job at last", sung to 'The red flag'! Such provocative kidding, ex-members told me, proclaimed the superiority of free thinking over ideological dogma: "some were sung with belief, others with fun, some with tongue in cheek, but with enjoyment" (anonymous pers. comm. 18/6/2008).

An interesting corollary of the VUCTC repertoire emphases during the 1945 to mid-1950s period was a prohibition on frothy popular songs and a concomitant preference for traditional folksong. "We used to have this principle", Graham Claridge affirmed, "you wouldn't sing popular songs… 'bulk music'" (interview). Indeed, the collated repertoire contains little contemporaneous popular song:

> ***David Somerset:*** It was unspoken, you just wouldn't do it.… They didn't want to sing anything that was mainstream.... One of the reasons why they *got* together was because they... refused to be part of the mainstream culture. ***Don Brown:*** It was this exclusive stuff, elitist stuff, "we don't want any of that populist stuff", because it was seen as being part of the peasantry. The commercialised, industrial music. [B] ***Trevor Mowbray*:** [We] picked up on the American folk songs... as... *natural* and American... and we liked them. But... Tin Pan Alley was—again, it's allied to this left-wing view...—they were trying to do something to us.

This "unspoken principle" represented another gesture towards self-definition by VUCTC members. Being self-generated, it can be regarded as its own expression of vernacular dominion—even if it effectively limited repertoire choices. Indeed, the advantage of such "home rules" is that they can be easily relaxed in certain cases. Songs from the musical *South Pacific* (1949), for instance, were accepted because of their anti-racist themes (Mary Mowbray, interview). Moreover, by the late-1950s, as student left-wing activity declined and unconventional popular material began appearing, like Tom Lehrer's "sick" parodies, the rule was dropped (Sissons 1971:16).

The TTC singsong repertoire also demonstrates club-specific customisation. As a larger club that encompassed a wider span of age groups and occupations, singsongs in the TTC were correspondingly more accepting of "public" material (57.2 percent of recovered material). Conversely, left-wing items barely feature in the TTC collation. Politics was not a shared interest, as in the VUCTC, and was perhaps even considered potentially divisive.

The smaller—and yet still sizable—number of bawdy songs in the TTC repertoire (6.3 percent) is also connected with the club's more mainstream membership. While bawdy songs apparently featured on all-male trips among ex-servicemen, ribaldry was considered far less acceptable on trips including women, who were an increasing presence on post-WWII trips. Many men were reluctant to sing bawdy songs around women, who were less likely to know them already and, it was thought, could potentially find them offensive. Furthermore, the club had a higher public reputation to uphold than the VUCTC, thus calling for greater discretion.

Nonetheless, more euphemistic and milder versions of bawdy items seem to have been embraced at mixed TTC singsongs. These included teasing songs like 'Sweet violets' and risqué items like 'Caviare comes from the virgin sturgeon'*. Their popularity in a supposedly "prim and proper" Wellington club highlights the general appeal that bawdy song of one kind or another held for trampers countrywide (as evidenced by tramping song books from clubs around New Zealand: see Chapter 5). Such material corresponded to tramping's liminoid adult adventure beyond the reach of a society. Bawdiness was also a key ingredient in the arena that singsongs provided for fun social interaction between young men and women. "A lot of these songs really are for mixed groups", Judith Claridge commented, adding that they had rarely featured on the all-female trips that began running in the 1980s (interview). Nonetheless, various strategies arose which enabled the boundaries of what was considered acceptable during the post-WWII heyday to be renegotiated at every event (see below).

The TTC collation also contains 105 songs about tramping, mountaineering, and skiing, almost four times the number for the VUCTC. This disparity partly reflects the TTC's larger membership and higher level of tramping activity, but also the fact that tramping-related songs probably became the prime expression of "exclusive" group identity for TTC trampers. By contrast, VUCTC members had various other platforms serving this function—the student occupation, political interests, and social rebelliousness—which could be expressed through repertoire choices. The respective output of each club's principal songwriters is another factor. The VUCTC's main songwriter was Harold Gretton (1914-1983), a linguist who studied at Victoria from 1935 to 1938, served during WWII and then tramped with the student club again while teaching after the War (Cleveland 2002). Commencing in the mid-1930s, he wrote six classic songs known to VUCTC members as "Gretton songs". The TTC's main songwriter Tony Nolan (1923-2003; see more Chapter 5), however, wrote or initiated at least thirty-seven items, similarly referred to by interviewees as "Tony's songs". As such terms show, these individuals were recognised figures within each club's singsong idioculture.

Performance dynamics

How did tramping singsongs start? How were songs chosen? Was anybody in charge? These were novel questions for the trampers I interviewed, referring to matters, I was

frequently told, that they "had never really thought about before". My questions stirred up memories that revealed singsongs to be a fundamentally "open" format: a vernacular domain of music-making explored afresh by the participants at each event. Nonetheless, a sense of the preferred performance dynamic—a combination of spontaneity, group consensus, flexible leadership, and participatory discretion—also emerged. This section first considers relevant situational factors at singsongs, before looking at these components and how they paralleled the group dynamics of tramping itself.

Situational factors

The characteristic positioning of trampers toward each other before singsongs primed them for informal singing. Usually people were in the midst of socialising—catching up in the truck, relaxing after dinner in a hut, yarning around a campfire—already clustered inwards. Trucks with double tiers, the ring of warmth around a campfire, hut platforms and bunks: all created a cave-like context. Before singsongs even began, then, they were arranged in a "focused gathering": an intimate "eye-to-eye ecological huddle" where everybody shares a point of "visual and cognitive focus" (Pickering and Green 1987b:4). Many interviewees recalled the flickering of eye contact while singing, especially in mutual enjoyment of humorous lyrics, and photographs also show people crowding or turning inwards once singsongs were underway (Plates 13, 14). The desire to maintain eye contact also helps account for the relatively sparing use of song books.

The size of singsongs varied and could affect people's participation. Three or four members might be enough, but eight to twelve strong groups were believed to be ideal to ensure most people's involvement. "If you've got a large number, and if people are rather shy... they don't feel nervous, they get caught up in it", Kath Offer told me (interview). Large hut parties might involve singsongs with several dozen participants, even two or three groups having simultaneous sessions in different areas.

Mellow lighting also encouraged participation, somebody noted, because "embarrassment is not present" (John Gates, interview). The sinking twilight of the truck journeys, bush huts illuminated by candles, darkness encircling the campfire glow: such dim lighting eased the intensity of close-quarters eye contact and supported a sense of anonymity. From my own experience, night-time darkness in the bush is peculiarly

thick. Encamped in an older shelter, like Cone Hut in the Tauherenikau Valley, musty smoke and bush-damp in the air, embers glimmering in the open fireplace, one readily grasps the spell these venues cast over singsong gatherings. Outdoor settings may be similarly enchanting: clear mountain nights—far from the sky glow of city streetlights—may reveal immense, glittering star-fields.

Plate 13: **Party singsong, 1950s**
TTC archives

"Somebody just decides to sing... and it grows"

Then— perhaps in a lull, from out of the hubbub, or sparked by a conspiratorial bunch—singing would begin. No preparation, planning, or procedures were required according to interviewees:

> ***Trevor Mowbray:*** Somebody would suggest singing a song, or... simply start singing by themselves.... ***David Somerset:*** People would just start singing and everyone else, if they knew it, would join in.... ***Andy Andersen:*** Somebody just decides to sing... and it grows.... [C]

Spontaneity was implicitly valued by participants. "It has to just… sort of happen by chance", Pam Gates explained. "You can't deliberately do it" (interview). To impose an organised plan upon a singsong would be to contradict its very nature. The choosing of the items was similarly unplanned: "somebody just starts a song, it's spontaneous". Spontaneity was what made singsongs fun—and "having fun" was their most obvious goal. "Fun", "good fun", or "good clean fun" was what singsongs were all about. "There was laughter all the way through", I was told (Pip Piper, interview). "No one wanted to get serious" (Don Boswell, interview A). As already discussed, the repertoire contained a wealth of comedic material and the goal of "fun" also informed many features of performance (see below).

Group consensus

The response to initiatory bursts of singing in trucks, huts, or around campfires reveals another key ingredient of singsong dynamics at TTC and VUCTC gatherings: group consensus. After a few lines had been sung, the group reaction could be instantly positive. Singsongs were often highly anticipated, the "icebreaker" everybody was waiting for upon boarding a Friday night truck. But this was not guaranteed:

> ***Trevor Mowbray:*** You test the water and if somebody else joins in with you, well away you go! If nobody joins in... then you just sit there. I think there were times when… nobody joined in, they didn't sort of feel like it.

The very existence of the singsong, then, depended upon a climate of group consensus—the "circular flow of feeling" at focused gatherings (Pickering and Green 1987b:4). People intuited an overall mood and their reaction in turn fed into others' perceptions. This consensual dynamic operated throughout the singsong, too, as when two songs were simultaneously started and group consensus—i.e. the most enthusiastic response—decided which prevailed.

Flexible leadership

Certain individuals had special roles at singsongs, especially those with good memories for songs and strong voices which "gave something for the rest to hang onto" (Andy

Andersen, interview). These people could also be prominent in instigating singsongs, perhaps giving occasional solos. One person noted that decisive personalities helped:

> ***John Gates:*** There might be a gap and someone then will start something... they've got to have a bit of a leader, a leadership "kick". Almost... "right, we'll sing this song, this is what I want to sing".

Yet, as the phrase "bit of a leader" suggests, singsongs were not formally directed and the "leading" role was often shared and sometimes even contested. "It could be cooperative... it might be competitive", explained well-known TTC vocalist Andy Andersen: "It depends on the people" (interview C). Moreover, singsongs were also the product of other individual contributions, like "suggesting" (calling out song titles), "starting off" (singing opening lines), and "motivating" (cajoling others). Singsongs had a collaborative essence that ultimately transcended the presence of strong singers or decisive personalities.

Participatory discretion

Participatory singing predominated at tramping singsongs and most people assumed the freedom to sing regardless of perceived ability or musical experience. Indeed, many people I talked with rated their vocal abilities fairly modestly and, while maybe lacking some initial confidence, never felt deterred from joining in. Some observed that combined group volume helped conceal one's own voice and thereby encouraged participation (the widespread "cloaking" effect noted by Thomas Turino: 2008:46). Even so, a certain tolerance for out-of-tune singing was needed: "I can remember on occasions thinking, 'oh that person... can't sing in tune to save himself, but he's still having a go at it'" (Maurice Perry, interview). If wrong notes were ultimately "no big deal", more deliberate disruption could attract discreet censure:

> ***Wayne Griffen:*** There was no discrimination or stigma to get involved. So long as you... [did] not yell and scream… and fitted in accordingly... but if somebody became a little bit obnoxious they could quite easily get a dig in the ribs or a kick in the shins: *gently*. Or a polite word whispered in their ear.

Singsong participation was discretionary, too. People did not have to join in every song, with all-inclusive items being interspersed with solo or sub-group "party pieces". "You

could sit in the back row and mouth the words that you remembered", Graham Claridge recalled (interview). The entire singsong was voluntary: "Sometimes people are happy to just be in their sack", John Gates observed, "listening" (interview). Even people who usually took a leading role might feel disinclined and could hardly be forced to sing.

Overall, then, the vernacular domain of these tramping singsongs was defined by a dynamic interplay of individual liberties and group imperatives. Hence—as unique combinations of personnel interacted, negotiated relationships and roles, and pooled their resources in the pursuit of spontaneous fun—each singsong unfolded in its own unique way. Such was the unpredictable essence of "making your own music as you go".

"People did what they wanted to do"

The basic performance dynamic identified above may inform singsongs in many situations, but given the preference for this musical format in the TTC and VUCTC, it clearly had special resonance in the tramping context. Christopher Small proposes that people who participate in musical performances are, in effect, "taking part in an ideal society" whose relationships are modelled through the relationships in the music-making (1987:74).[2] This subsection argues that the informal interplay of individual-group relationships in the singsongs discussed here provided a suitable match—and, in the outward-bound truck sessions, a rehearsal—for the group tramping experience.

As an activity, tramping resembles the singsongs in several ways. While requiring gear, preparation, and planning, tramping has an essentially informal ambience. The journey framework—getting from A to B to C—is the main underlying structure, with the hour-to-hour unfolding of travel, incident, and ancillary tasks being unplanned and thus involving much spontaneous conversation and interaction. Furthermore, unlike a structured team sport like rugby, tramping contains innate latitude for participatory discretion:

[2] Small later developed this theory further, proposing that musical events can be understood as rituals during which participants affirm, explore, and celebrate the relationships of their idealised society (see Small 1998). Participants can thus be regarded as engaging in "a form of behaviour that we call metaphorical" (102). Various features of the tramping singsongs could be interpreted as metaphors in this way (e.g., the roughly circular spatial arrangement representing a non-hierarchical, egalitarian ideal), but the development of such an interpretation is beyond the purview of the present thesis.

Graham Claridge: It's a way of exercising yourself without having to belong to a team. You can join a rugby club and… it's a solid commitment. Whereas tramping you can take it or leave it... you don't have to be so organised, you don't have to be skilled even… anybody can put one foot in front of the other and walk.

Tramping also involves the expectation of self-reliance and sharing of roles (e.g., around cooking, washing up, walking at the front of the party). Leadership is flexible, too. Some trips may eschew a leader entirely, an egalitarian approach that an ex-VUCTC tramper directly compared with singsongs:

David Somerset: People would just start singing… there wasn't any kind of leadership… and I think people preferred it that way. The whole thing about that tramping ethos was that people did what they wanted to do... if you wanted to leave the party and go off somewhere else... nobody insisted upon you doing things in a group….

Needless to say, larger tramping clubs like the TTC usually require official club trips to have leaders, not so much as assigned authority figures (like "team captains") but as individuals who take overall responsibility and mediate decision-making. Certain individuals find leading a niche role to which they are well-suited—rather like those with good voices at singsongs—but it can be regarded as something of a burden.[3] The tacit competitive element that sometimes arose at singing sessions has tramping parallels, too. The writer has borne witness on many trips, for instance, to quasi-competitive "pursuits" between individuals so as to arrive at the next hut ahead of the party. The individual-group relationship inherent to tramping is also suggestive of the singsong dynamic:

> ***Graham Claridge:*** You go with a group, but… you are an *individual* in a group… looking after yourself, not everyone else, unless, of course, you are leading the party. ***Janet King:*** People who… wanted to go tramping… liked to be able to go off with a group and only being organised to a certain degree... they had to fit in to a certain degree... leave at a certain time and... keep up with the group.... But they still were an individual. [A] ***Tony Somerset:*** You did it with other people, but it was a personal

[3] One article defines a leader as: "That member of a mountain party who carries the greatest load, has least to say in all plans, and is blamed for everything, including the weather. Always given the hardest bed in hut or tent because he is always last to bed and first up and so has least time to notice the discomfort" (*TT* 12/1955).

> challenge. Then you shared in the achievement.... Mind you, you watched out for people who were not keeping up… making sure they were okay.

The "ideal society" modelled at the singsongs, then, closely resembles that of the group tramping trip. At the singing sessions, these trampers sought the same flexible combination of individual liberties and group camaraderie. The gravitation towards singsongs in the post-WWII years—over existing options like "Glee Clubs"—thus gains in significance. Singsongs were discovered to best match the social dynamic of tramping; at the very least, they added no extraneous formality.

Singsong performance features

The making-our-own approach taken at TTC and VUCTC singsongs included myriad performance features. Some were inherent in individual/group singing formats, others were prompted by song structures, while yet more features emerged impromptu as the event unfolded. The raw, "messy" qualities of the resulting interaction of possibilities are vividly captured on the TTC recording made at uproarious 1974 celebrations at Field Hut (CD1). The following subsections unpack some performance components, focusing respectively on individual vocal styles; group singing; song forms and related features; and instruments and sound-making.

Individual vocal style

The tramping singsongs mainly involved group singing, but their small scale always granted some prominence to the strong, tuneful voices of individuals within the main unison. These voices served a basic practical function:

> ***Don Brown:*** Because you haven't got an instrument… an orchestra… a piano, you haven't got anything like that. Therefore it was important that you had the sort of bellwether person who everyone latched onto, because he could hold the tune. [A]

Most of those who guided the singing seem to have been men. Some women did lead, but most active female contributors were remembered as "suggesters" and "starters". This emphasis partly reflected the male-dominated club memberships and perhaps also a "deferring to men" by women in this period, such as Mary Mowbray noted of the mid-

1950s VUCTC. Some interviewees observed, though, that the normally louder and deeper male voice possibly suited the role better.

Some trampers I interviewed had "leading" voices. Most sang in a plain, unornamented style, identified by others with what was considered "proper" singing in mid-century New Zealand. One tramper noted the influence of hymn singing on this style: "clear singing in tune was the emphasis" (Mary Mowbray, interview). The rich tenor voice of TTC member Andy Andersen exemplified this (see CD3), his steady phrasing imparting a droll solemnity to slower numbers. Tony Somerset, a "leading" voice at 1950s VUCTC singsongs, also sang tunefully (see CD2), but made more use of word emphases and volume dynamics.

Other trampers recalled how pleasurable it was to sing along with or listen to such voices, but usually without much elaboration: general adjectives like "good", "magnificent", and "distinctive" tended to be used. The individuals in question, while pleased with the attention their singing brought, themselves pointed out that—perhaps aside from some school or church experience—they were not trained singers. Indeed, a recurring tendency among interviewees to refer to "voices" rather than "singers" (cf. Dunn 1980:50) was subtle acknowledgement that conspicuous artistry was less important at singsongs than group enjoyment. "Good voice" suggests a natural gift that simply stands out among the others.

That such voices could be readily identified at singsongs is significant, though. Each had an idiosyncratic fluency all its own, an "indescribable vernacular flavour" arising from the absence of training or a surrounding scaffolding of aesthetic commentary (Cicero 1971:147). Even the singing of trampers like John Ross (see CD4), which departs far from the norms of "proper" singing, has its own fluent idiom. Perhaps, as Allan Thomas suggests, the "impress of personality" associated with individual voices in community music-making like the club singsongs conferred a shared social identity (2004:9; cf. Grainger 1915). Their familiar presence enabled the music to be recognised, in the midst of performance, as belong to the community: as "ours".

Group singing

Singsongs might begin modestly, with some solos or a small bunch leading the way, but group singing was the norm. Such group singing had various interesting aspects, many of which are captured on the 1974 recording (CD1) and will be referenced here using timed examples in square brackets. Of particular interest are various kinds of "participatory discrepancies", the out-of-time and out-of-tune imperfections which, according to Charles Keil, render performances "open, imperfect, and subject to redefinition by every emergent self" (Keil and Feld 1994:171). At these singsongs, the vernacular stimulated discrepancies to an extent that enlarges our understanding of what Keil's concept might encompass.

Tramping singsongs often featured loud group singing. Newsletter descriptions of early TTC singsongs are sprinkled with synonyms like "hearty", "energetic and enthusiastic", "lusty", and "rousing". Loud volume, Don Brown explained, was a practical necessity in situations like VUCTC parties: "the noise level seemed to induce you to do that... raucous singing" (interview A). Another suggested that loud singing was partly aesthetically motivated: it helped drown out discordant voices. The presence of two or three strong singers was seen as beneficial in keeping group singing in tune and for supporting harmony parts. "We created wonderful harmonisation of the songs we sang", Wayne Griffen recalled, adding too that "others were pretty rough, it just depended on the mix" (interview).

Loud singing may have helped maintain core unison, but various factors worked to desynchronise the performance. The absence of song books—and unconducive conditions even if one was at hand, such as dim lighting—created textual variation. As lyrics were retrieved from memory in the moment, textual divergences arose [1.00], with a guesswork approach based on rhyming patterns and other formulae being adopted by some participants. Melodies could be half-remembered, too, such that performances became scattered with wobbly notes [2.08], wild improvisations [2.39], and mistiming [10.23]—perhaps followed by laughter if especially discrepant. "We probably had some pretty strange tunes", Janet King joked, "everyone... singing in a different key!" (interview A). People might hum, whistle, or "la la" their way through unfamiliar verses before rejoining choruses [2.30]. A kind of rhythmic "staggering"

could occur if people missed cues in the fun of the moment [9.18] or were trying to discern the words:

> ***Don Brown:*** You were always trying to pick up the words... singing a quarter of a beat behind the other people… and … when they didn't know the words they would be singing sort of a quarter-note behind. Which added a sort of "texture"! [A]

Singsongs thus generated musical surfaces of considerable—if unintended—complexity, as heard throughout the 1974 recording. The joyous indefatigability of the group performance is striking, however. Continuing to sing through thick and thin was obviously satisfying, bearing witness to the deep participatory investment of those involved.

The various performance imperfections outlined above can be recognised as "participatory discrepancies" (Keil and Feld 1994:96-108), but they seem far "messier" than what Keil describes and extend to phenomena like "off-text-ness" and "off-cueing". Perhaps only in informal domains of "music without musicians", as here, where untrained participants predominate, where vague memories are tolerated and alcohol consumed, do discrepancies attain such a riotous pitch.

Song forms and related features

Singsong performance possibilities were also enlarged by the diverse song forms encompassed by the club repertoires. Forms like strophic, verse-chorus, or call-and-response each involved a different textual structure or formulae, so that the overall singsong unfolded as a patchwork of variations on the group unison format. Their overall effect was to create a more varied and therefore gratifying group experience.

The basic verse-chorus form could involve entertaining variations on simple unison singing. "Enumerative" catalogue songs, for instance, those with identical choruses and unordered verses on a given theme (Renwick 2001:67), feature extensively in the club repertoires and led to a kind of solo/chorus-type performance:

> ***Pip Piper:*** Some of these songs are such that there are so many verses, like 'The ball of Kerrymuir'… we would all wait in turn to sing… then everybody would get into the

> chorus and... it tended to get louder and louder, because we were waiting now for someone else… Sometimes somebody would try to repeat, "oh we've had that one!"

Call-and-response songs like sea shanties also created pleasing performance patterns (e.g., solo lines being repeated by the group) and encouraged participation regardless of whether people were already familiar with the words. Indeed, many items encouraged participation through textual formulae whereby minimal changes occurred with successive stanzas. Some used "incremental" formulae—involving a simple progression of actions, or a counting up or down in subsequent verses—while others used "cumulative" formulae, whereby verses grow successively longer (Renwick 2001:59-91). A full exposition of the song forms used is beyond the scope of this thesis, but others included:

Strophic ballad (e.g., 'The foggy foggy dew')
Dialogue (stanzas are dialogues between characters; e.g., 'The Cutty Wren')
De-cumulative (stanzas get shorter [Gardham 2004]; e.g., 'Oh Sir Jasper do not touch me'*)
Rounds (e.g., 'Row, row, row your boat')
Single quatrain (e.g., 'Hitler has only got one ball')
Repeated ad libitum (e.g., 'Ging gang goolie'*)
Parody medleys (e.g., 'The egg')
Limericks (sung limericks with chorus)
Dramatic monologue with sung chorus (e.g., 'The wild west show'*)
Dramatic dialogue with sung chorus ('Be kind to your web-footed friends'*)
Songs for dancing (e.g., 'Picking up paw paws'*)

Particular songs could also involve special performance features, including actions, clapping to substitute for impolite words, and mock accents. Other songs included gaps in lyrics for people's names to be inserted (e.g., 'A fast pair of skis'*). Further performance strategies include rearranging songs as rounds, either impromptu or on a regular basis. Running medleys could be developed, perhaps of songs using the same or a similar tune (e.g., see CD1:3.55-4.05). Chanted interludes (e.g., "Next verse, same as the first/A little bit louder and a little bit worse") or hummed melodic vamps could also be added. Another performance technique was the repeating of a line, phrase, or word in a high treble register, before the next line began (e.g., see CD1:3.47). Customary in some songs (e.g., 'Little ball of yarn'*), the technique was used spontaneously elsewhere, perhaps to maintain rhythm during empty measures, there usually being no

instrumental accompaniment to perform this function. Such repeats also enabled those unsure of words to participate by adding a decorative element. All these touches added variety, entertainment, and self-definition to the singsong.

Song forms and performance features could also be subverted for comic effect. Bill Gates recalled "mis-leading" TTC singsongs when calling out lines for 'On top of Old Smoky', as per the 1951 Weavers recording, by circling back to earlier verses until singing collapsed in protest (interview). Other disruptions included shouting out spontaneous "responses" to lines, mid-song, and word substitutions. Bill remembered 'Mockingbird Hill' being mischievously altered on one occasion to accommodate a tramper's name: "Tra la la twiddly dee dee, it gives me a thrill/To wake up in the morning with Marjorie Hill"! Such procedures were familiar to some interviewees from school-assembly singing, where the crowd context granted a degree of impunity for subversive alterations like "Speed bonnie boat like a turd on a string!".[4] The facility to create such spontaneous modifications was another creative competency people used to make singsongs more "fun", more "our own".

Instruments and sound-making

Musical instruments and improvised percussion could also feature at singsongs. Guitars and piano accordions were used at post-WWII hut parties, interclub events, and bottle parties (see Plates 9, 13, 14). The annual Tauherenikau barn dance usually featured an instrumental ensemble for dancing, such as described in Chapter 3. Other instruments used over the years included banjo-ukulele, tea-chest bass, swannee whistle, kazoo, tom-tom, and even bagpipes. Wind-up gramophones were also sometimes used.

For obvious reasons, however, instruments were seldom taken on normal tramping trips, except for light, portable types like mouth organs and ukuleles. TTC songwriter Tony Nolan sometimes packed a ukulele (see Plates 7, 10), an instrument well-suited to singsongs for adding a pick-me-up pulse that did not impose a rigid rhythmic or harmonic framework. Improvised percussion was another option. Singsong sound-making included finger clicking, clapping, or stamping, or the use of *objets trouvés*:

[4] On this form of musical play, see Sutton-Smith 1981:36-37.

Maurice Perry: There was always people who were prepared to just sort of bang anything as if they were the local drummer… you know... with the knife on the table… tapping beer bottles to try and emulate a drum or some percussion instrument. Or getting very sophisticated and filling bottles to different levels with water to get different tones....

Common tramping items like billies, billy-lids, tin cups and plates—all made to withstand considerable wear and tear—were also employed for such purposes (see Plate 14), a casual commandeering that bespeaks an obvious vernacular attitude.

Plate 14: **Musical instruments and percussion**

Left: Sports Meeting, mid-1950s; Right: Tararua Hut, 1953. *Ian Baine; TTC*

As the cacophonous clattering on the 1974 recording suggests, such percussion could be embraced with a vengeance at more raucous gatherings (see CD1:9.34-10.16). "It was all pretty uninhibited", Bill Gates enthused, "pretty primitive in many ways" (interview). It also contributed a sonic layer strewn with participatory discrepancies. Banging away on a billy bespeaks a strong urge toward group synchrony, yet each strike was a shard of individuality: an impulse to assert oneself in the communal din. These performance textures thus corroborates Charles Keil's dual claim that discrepancies in music-making both "bring people into the sound in a totemic or presymbolic mode" and demonstrate that "every individual on the planet has a different time feel… a different signature… everyone dances differently" (Keil and Feld 1994:167, 171).

The singsong takes its course

The tramping club singsongs varied in duration, from short sessions lasting thirty minutes through to marathon efforts many hours long. The line between "singsong" and "socialising" could be blurred, too, with breathers between songs expanding with conversation, banter, and other kinds of self-entertainment. Ex-VUCTC members recalled verse recitations and dramatic monologues, while TTC hut parties often included group dances like 'Shoo fly' and 'Picking up paw-paws'[*], performed in circles—thus allowing the group to maintain eye contact—with sung refrains. Ski lodge sessions might feature games like 'Jumbucks' and 'Four-engine bombers' (both eventually banned because of the resulting damage).[5] Singing, then, was merely one self-entertainment tool among many. The following subsections describe some notable aspects of the ongoing singsong event.

Leading interplay

Longer singsongs usually involved a sharing around of "leading" duties. One tramper observed that this helped lubricate the onward flow of songs by stirring associations:

> ***Don Boswell:*** Very often you'd alternate or help each other, or the other person would sing something that reminded you of something. There wasn't any competition at all. In fact it was *better* to have a few people, rather than suddenly find that you were sort of the choirmaster… it was more fun if there were several of you. [B]

Sharing leading duties could arouse a certain rivalry in some individuals, though. Tony Nolan, for instance, was known to "get a bit miffed" if the initiative was spontaneously seized from him, yet such byplay was generally accepted as part of the singsong. Some interviewees observed, for instance, that items could be "shouted down" by groups if they had already been performed. Provocative interruptions, as one tramper recalled one from a Sports Meeting singsong of the 1940s, were another vernacular liberty that might be explored for "fun":

> ***Don Boswell:*** There was a guy was trying to sing opera, which was a bit serious and everyone was starting to get a bit edgy… 'La donna è mobile'… building up to a beautiful climax

[5] 'Jumbucks' was a playground game that had largely died out by 1900, except in tramping clubs (Sutton-Smith 1972:194).

> and then I came in and sang: "Black pudding, black pudding/eighteen pence here". And everyone collapsed in laughter… it seemed fitting at the time. [B]

"Pushing the boundaries"

Other practices were related to performance of bawdy repertoire. As noted already, ribaldry of some sort or another was a provocative part of the "good fun" at singsongs. While mild bawdiness was widely accepted, it was recognised that material with explicit sexual or "taboo" content (e.g., prostitution, masturbation, venereal disease) was potentially offensive. Yet, as one person admitted, "it was hard to say where the borderline was": there was always a certain degree of uncertainty about what was an acceptable level of bawdiness for each gathering. This subsection discusses various informal strategies used at TTC and VUCTC sessions to negotiate this ambiguous middle-ground—or exploit it in the pursuit of fun.

There were fairly clear guidelines about bawdy songs at TTC singsongs. While items with graphic content might be performed on all-male trips, they were considered unacceptable when both men and women were present. One tramper recalled them being shouted down in the late-1940s:

Don Boswell: It wasn't a mixed company repertoire and if you were sitting round at night around a campfire and somebody started trotting those out, they'd soon be shut up... others would say, "Hey, come on, mixed company! Ladies present, we don't want to hear that one". [A]

Such "home rules", including bowdlerisation process nicknamed "The Purity League" (see below), were still operating in the 1960s. An interviewee told me she was grateful, after having an unfortunate experience, that these conventions were mostly observed:

Janet King: I can remember... on my first Christmas trip down the Rees-Dart... there was a chap... what we would call really dirty-minded... used to make a *point* of singing those songs... did it with *such* enjoyment and he did it to shock. I was really repelled by that.... But he was the only person that I remember. [A]

The intent behind the performance of ribaldry in such cases—having fun at somebody else's expense—was perhaps the major rationale for TTC censorship procedures. Their goal was to maintain an all-inclusive sense of enjoyment at club singsongs.

Nonetheless, TTC singsongs still allowed for mixed groups to engage in pushing—and therefore defining—their own boundaries of acceptability. A sense of daring could accompany even milder ribaldry which, as women members I interviewed confessed, they did not always comprehend (i.e. "It wasn't until later I understood them, after I was married!"). But as Janet King recalled, feigned innocence could be part of the mutual byplay of the singsong. "You didn't make it obvious that you knew *exactly* what it meant... just laugh... pretend that you didn't know... pretend to be shocked" (interview A). Furthermore, club expectations might be flouted. "There's always the odd person who will push the boundaries", Maurice Perry commented. "Bring out a verse that only they have heard" (interview). In such cases, the "circular flow of feeling" at the singsong helped decide whether censorship measures would kick in or not (Pickering and Green 1987b:4). If participants were all well-acquainted, TTC norms might be suspended. Pam Gates, for example, told me she had gained an *entrée* into the male-only repertoire—becoming "one of the boys"—and giving her a potential provocateur role at other singsongs (interview). Various strategies, contingencies, and exceptions, then, allowed each group to define their own territory of acceptable provocativeness.

VUCTC singsongs were reputed to be more unconstrained. "No one ever objected to any of the songs... didn't matter how bawdy", David Somerset recalled (interview). Such licence perhaps partly accounts for the club's "immoral" reputation. Nonetheless, there was also some tacit recognition of the potential offensiveness of ribaldry and a range of strategies to cope. Some material seems to have been only being shared among a select circle, for example. Mary Mowbray recalled older male students self-censoring in her presence—"'Eskimo Nell' was the one they always threatened us with" (interview)—while another woman was informed that 'The good ship *Venus*'[*] would only be performed "after your bedtime". While such comments sound condescending, they served to create a cautionary restriction. Curious students were given fair warning, while those initiated into the most graphic bawdiness (which included both men and women) could enjoy such material in their own disapproval-free environment.

The presence of outsiders at VUCTC singsongs also prompted strategies for discovering mutually-satisfying comfort levels:

Pip Piper: Maybe some Student Christian Movement people, you know, very nice people, [were] tramping with us... you would be a little bit careful…. On the other hand, you can sense that some of these people are enjoying it... you just go with it… 'The foggy foggy dew'... is a bit suggestive... a gentle suggestion. You'd sort of notice people getting into that one… a nice sort of low, roll-with-the-song, and therefore you think, "oh that's good" and we will sing something else that's a bit worse.

Lastly, as noted already, many ex-student trampers felt that wittiness or clever humour was the saving grace of many bawdy songs. "If it's not clever and funny then to hell with it", John Ross declared (interview). But he and others acknowledged that this standard was dropped in some situations. As more alcohol was drunk or when the general repertoire was exhausted, after perhaps most trampers had retired for the night, the singsong could segue into ever more obscene and "gross" items. "After a while", Pip Piper recalled, "it was all on" (interview). Thus, even aficionados of extreme bawdiness found occasions to push their own personal boundaries.

Later stages

The later stages of singsongs could unfold in various ways. The arrival of a truck at a road-end or in downtown Wellington would bring an abrupt halt. Quieter singsongs around a campfire might slowly run their course, through the glowing embers having a hypnotic effect, as people turned to conversation or succumbed to exhaustion. Participants might chose ever slower and gentler songs, or run out of lung or throat power: "You very quickly got hoarse", Don Brown recalled, "because everyone was singing too loud". If some stalwarts continued after most people had retired to their sleeping bags to rest, singsongs could become an obnoxious distraction. Interviewees recalled occasional protests being directed at such indefatigable—and possibly mischievous—enthusiasts who thus kept others from sleeping.

When such considerations were absent, however, as at barn dances or bonfire sessions, and if participants had enough stamina, singing could continue late into the night, even

until dawn. One tramper recalled that once social energies had peaked, a mood of maudlin tranquillity could descend, inspiring a more sentimental repertoire:

> ***Don Boswell:*** When I was a student we used to have what we called "2am songs"… rather mournful, dreary songs like 'The letter edged in black'… when everybody is getting very low and half of them have sloped off to bed and the other half have passed out... someone might start singing "2am songs"... it fits in with the mood. [A]

Song-making

Songs about tramping held a special place in the TTC and VUCTC repertoires. Known by heart, they were sung week after week in the post-WWII years. My research has recovered over 100 extant items of this kind sung in these two clubs, along with many variants and the titles of now-forgotten items. Depicting various tramping scenarios, they are dotted with references to well-known mountains and huts, even a few prominent individuals. Here the tramping singsongs were most explicitly "made our own" by trampers. The thematic content of these songs is significant, of course (see below), but the processes of their creation are also interesting. Song-making was another activity that made singsongs entertaining.

Tramping-related songs were created from the first years of Wellington club tramping, an early TTC example being 'A (she) tramper's lament' (*TT* 3/1929). Song-making continued during the 1930s and increased markedly after World War II (cf. Maclean 1994:214), with ex-servicemen perhaps carrying over from army singsongs a newfound interest in comic parody.

The creation of songs about tramping (along with mountaineering and skiing) often occurred on trips. Collective composition could be part of campfire self-entertainment. TTC interviewees recalled "trip songs" gradually lengthening as a running commentary on daily events:

> ***Bill Gates:*** We had a trip up the Wilkin with sixteen of us and... sitting around the fires at night we'd compose this song, 'Sixteen in the Wilkin was something to see'*. ***Pam Gates:*** Oh yes… sitting round doing these things. It was a hilarious trip... people sort of contributed bits and pieces. Then we had a reunion and we all put it together officially.

Another person recalled the communal construction of a song, afterwards dubbed 'The National Park in May', on the track as a series of topical verses:

Dave Gobey: This [trip] turned into a shambolic wandering around in mist and scoria for about three days with a great group of people.... I knew the tune of 'The Lincolnshire poacher'. I would... have been thinking about something as we were trudging along... shared it around and it sort of developed from then... With a tune that everybody knows... people can easily contribute.

Song-making could also provide a useful distraction in other tedious situations, Dave recalled, like being storm-bound in bivouacs or during "endless plods" down river terraces, when tunes could be mentally revolved in time with the walking rhythm.

Some of the classic tramping-related songs by Tony Nolan and Harold Gretton appear to have been composed in similar circumstances, with many undoubtedly drawing upon real-life trips and incidents. Some of Nolan's comments indicate he took a fairly vernacular approach to his own "week-end affairs":

> I have always considered my tunes and parodies as one week-end affairs. Usually they are composed and sung almost immediately: in fact, often they are sung, verse by verse, as they are put together, thus it is impossible to clean them up or rewrite them with better words. This would result in confusion, for every person on the particular trip is a potential "carrier" and the disease spreads like wildfire. (1949:29)

On the other hand, the intricate wordplay of Harold Gretton's songs suggests they may have been consciously crafted over a longer period.

This song-making relied heavily on certain creative processes. Tramping content was sometimes substituted into existing songs (e.g., a "tramper" replacing a "soldier" in 'Merry month of May'[*]), a procedure that could occur spontaneously at singsongs. Other items set new words to borrowed tunes, perhaps retaining or adapting chorus lines. Parody was also common, sometimes pointedly referring back to the original and other times not. These song-making processes all point to the vernacular approach of the singsong culture. Each involved the vernacularisation of appropriated resources and,

crucially, all were easily accomplished. By using existing ingredients (i.e. a melody or lyric formula), new songs could be swiftly produced and performed. Borrowing tunes also made items easier to learn. The scarcity of original tunes among the songs of these two clubs shows the value placed on maximising singsong participation.

Parody was an especially interesting vernacularisation process. The dialogism of parody—the "dialogue" it sets up between original and parody—can be innately humorous due to the incongruity of perspectives (Smith 2007:261), and was thus always welcome. A parody like 'Tramping the ranges'*, for instance, generates inherent comedy from the absurdity of attempting to translate 'Waltzing Matilda' into outdoor recreation terms. Furthermore, as Ian Russell notes, "Parody is a form of criticism" (1987:75). By appropriating and transforming material from mainstream culture, the parody process could thus generate "resistance vernacular" (Potter 1995). This can be seen with the VUCTC item, 'The slopes of Mt. Alpha'*, based upon Jimmy Kennedy and Will Gròsz's mid-1930s popular song 'Isle of Capri'. The parody mocks the unreal romanticism of the original in light of an incident on the Southern Crossing route over the Tararua Range—an "old walnut tree" becomes skin-tearing "leatherwood" and the alluring Italian woman, a tough female tramper—thus implying a critique of Tin Pan Alley that students would have appreciated:

> 'Twas on the slopes of Mt. Alpha I met her,
> 'Neath the shade of a leatherwood tree,
> She had a razor-sharp slasher beside her,
> She said "Come down the Quoin Ridge with me."

A few tramping parodies involved non-sexual texts being converted into risqué form, but the reverse process, a creative bowdlerisation of existing ribaldry, was far more common. One process was given the name "The Purity League":

Don Brown: For example, "roll a leg over, each man in his turn" was changed to "roll a log over, each man had his turn"…. In the Tararuas, particularly.... When people sang really dreadful words… people would say "oh, Purity League!" and... try and clean it up…. [A]

Various classic tramping-specific songs were either converted from or inspired by bawdy originals, including 'No boots at all'* ('No balls at all'), 'Up at Kime'* ('In

Mobile'), and 'The Tararua ranges'* ('The North Atlantic Squadron'). Perhaps the shifting gender proportions in mainstream clubs like the TTC after WWII created unique conditions for encouraging Tony Nolan and others to build their extensive corpus of tramping-related songs.

New songs might disappear soon after being created—the extant repertoire includes various ephemeral ditties—but others became firm favourites. Certain items, especially narrative ballads, could retain considerable textual consistency as they were picked up and passed on. Others changed, however, inadvertently sometimes when original words were misheard or confused. "Where there was a line I wasn't quite certain about", Andy Andersen admitted, "I'd make something up to fit in" (interview C). Other changes were more deliberate: "I always felt free to make modifications", Tony Somerset told me (interview). Some songs allowed for the addition of entirely new verses. Thus, enumerative catalogue songs like 'The Tararua ranges'* and 'Up at Kime'* probably acquired and shed verses as they spread (see Appendix 4). One tramper recalled new stanzas emerging at singsongs:

Maurice Perry: Quite often I remember, as one verse of a song was going, someone… would keep quiet... dreaming up the next verse… if the song had three or four verses, then someone would carry on with number five, which we had never heard of before….

These various processes of change indicate that tramping-related songs often acquired "vernacular textuality" (Atkinson 2004). They were regarded as common property almost, to be freely used and adapted to different circumstances, such that as songs were transmitted to other clubs they could be repopulated with new personnel, locales, and club nicknames. The tramping song books in the writer's personal collection show that the club-specific details in 'Tramping the ranges'*, for example, have been modified at least seven times. As products of the vernacular, their content stayed "in motion".

A few orally-transmitted tramping-related songs had remarkable textual stability, though, including most "Gretton songs". Perhaps ongoing admiration of their inventive word-play gave them an authorial stamp, stimulating a more "literary" mode of reception among trampers and thus counteracting the effects of vernacular textuality. Tony Nolan's songs often changed considerably, though, perhaps due to their relatively

plain language, which rendered them amenable to casual alteration without their narrative gist being lost and gave them a more "anonymous" quality. Apparently, Nolan did not like such changes:

> ***Andy Andersen:*** Tony complained to me... that he was out of Wellington a lot and when he came back they were all singing the way I did! He wasn't pleased and I can see his point. I'd heard it and I'd got most of it. Because he wasn't there, they would've ended up singing my version.... [C]

Nolan's strong sense of song ownership may have also stimulated his various 1960s recording ventures (see Chapter 5).

Lyric themes

The tramping-related songs of the singsong heyday provide a rich gallery of post-WWII Wellington tramping culture, depicting archetypal scenarios (e.g., tramping through rain, crossing rivers, boiling billies), containing colloquial terms, and conveying typical attitudes. The songs also reflect the club communities from which they sprang, these portions of the TTC and VUCTC repertoires being like collective self-portraits where topics of central interest were explored from different angles. This section discusses the principal themes of these songs and how they supported the singsongs' explicit goal (having fun), as well as the vitality of tramping itself.

One group of songs directly celebrates the warm *communitas*—the sense of an egalitarian social bond—of tramping experiences. 'The brew song'*, for example, finds the narrator invited out of rainy night to join the "gang around the fireside" having an uproarious hut singsong. An adaptation of 'Bible stories'* similarly enjoins all-comers to "Join the Tararuas and make yourself at home"; while 'Viva la TTC'* recasts a French drinking song in tramping terms: "Tramping along, singing a song/never a care, to the hills we belong". Other items link tramping camaraderie with drinking and carousing. In 'The TTC'*, for instance, the club holds meetings inside pubs. A sense of camaraderie is also implicit in the "we" of celebratory outdoors anthems like 'My big hobnailers'*:

Where the piton rings and the bell-bird sings,
On venison steaks we'll live like kings,
Where the kea cries in the summer skies,
We'll go up the mountains in the snow.

But other songs—indeed, a far greater number—take delight in the hardships, discomforts, tribulations, and risks of tramping, dealing variously with poor weather (rain, snow); difficult terrain (cliffs, mud); and daunting flora and fauna (sandflies, scratchy scrub). Huts are another recurring topic of mock complaint. 'Up at Kime'* catalogues the problems associated with the eponymous hut, including "icebergs in the tea", "the roof has fallen down", and "no wood to burn". Several Harold Gretton songs revel in the communal ordeals of the tramping experience, including 'Double bunking'*, a lament about hut overcrowding, and 'Pass the roll over'*, an extravagant fable about bush toilets. "Hardship" songs contributed to the singsong in several ways. In some cases, like 'The tramper's lament'*, the protagonist vows to abandon tramping:

Take me up tenderly, show me the big city,
Far from the mountains, too-loo-ra-lay.
Ferry me, carry me, far away,
Goodbye the snow and ice, goodbye the edelweiss.

Such a response probably appealed to trampers—i.e. those tough enough to endure the ordeal—and supported a sense of select camaraderie. Yet these tramping "hardship" songs were frequently imbued with irony and self-awareness (cf. Cleveland 1991:8; Ross 1998:18). Indeed, while trampers may relish the tribulations of tramping ("the worst trips are the most memorable"), the question remains as to why this is preferred to home comforts. These songs mined a central irony of tramping for comic effect, that is, according to the self-entertainment goal of the singsongs.

A handful of songs take the "hardship" theme to a morbid extreme, depicting fatalities or injuries suffered by trampers (e.g., 'No boots at all'*), skiers (e.g., 'What a hell of a way to die'*), or mountaineers (e.g., 'A young mountaineer'*). One interviewee dubbed these "coping songs", explaining that by voicing anxieties about the riskier side of mountain recreation, they provided a psychological release. They may have also functioned like the "cautionary tales" of occupational folklore (Santino 1978:202-204),

quietly reminding participants of the need for good gear and sound judgement. Nonetheless, black humour rendered such topics palatable in the singsong context.

Another set of songs deal with men and women being together in the hills. Predictably, given the male dominance of song-writing in both clubs, these often express a male perspective. Some offer chauvinist humour, complaining about women neglecting hut chores or belittling their ability to perform basic tasks like lighting fires. Other songs depict female trampers as a tougher breed, but derive comedy from social incongruities—e.g., bush gear contrasting with fashionable notions of "feminine" clothing (cf. Maclean 1994:164-165)—and a presumed predatory courtship of males. Tony Nolan's 'The Terror of the Terraneek'* was described by several women interviewees as a "typical male fantasy" in this regard:

> She's the terror of the Terraneekau, as tough as she can be;
> She'll make love 'neath the stars above,
> But she makes sure with a three-o-three.

Other songs, however, portray a more even-handed comedy of manners around desire, sex, courtship, and marriage. Male antagonists are sometimes abandoned by lovers (e.g., 'Anna Hooch'), others remain mulishly oblivious to admirers (e.g., 'Let him go, let him tarry'). In 'Too-roo-loo-roo-lay'*, a young couple seen "sneaking up the mountain with one sleeping-bag between 'em" are pursued by an aggrieved spouse wielding an ice axe. Many songs suggest a reluctance to marry among male trampers, perhaps due to the presumed curtailment of tramping freedoms this would cause. Such scenarios comically reflected the realities of club tramping, where men and women tramped, lived, and slept alongside each other in close quarters in the bush; sometimes courting and marrying. Like the bawdy repertoire, these items were a provocative ingredient at singsongs on mixed trips.

The TTC repertoire also contained songs that reflect on its history and reputation. Certain items, for instance, satirise the club's supposed respectability (e.g., 'The TTC'*), while its "anthem", 'The Tararua ranges'*, mostly catalogues the foibles and eccentricities of unnamed club officers, for example:

The Chief Guide's getting old and grey.
He's lost the track three times today.
He'll never find it anyway,
In the Tararua Ranges.

"It was just chucking off", one person defended. Other songs touch on the depth of the TTC membership by exploring the theme of aging. Usually they are narrated by old-timers remembering their active years with nostalgia and a little irony: "Thank God I've learnt some sense at last/my mountaineering days are past" (from 'I used to be a mountaineer'*). These items also contain some of the more poetic descriptions of wilderness in the corpus—a curiously undeveloped aspect of tramping-related songs (see Chapter 5).

Tramping-related songs, finally, provided an archetypal representation of tramping. While many songs were inspired by actual incidents, these circumstances were often forgotten as songs spread and phrases like "the leader", "the club", "the track", and "the mountains" acquired a generalised meaning. Certain items even spawned expressions that were adopted across the Wellington scene, one example being 'The terror of the Terraneek'* (see above). While apparently based on an actual woman, this label came to be applied to any young, fit, and self-reliant female tramper. The most common character of all was "a tramper": the ultimate archetypal figure of shared identity and experience.

The creation of archetypal content also extended to bush legends and folklore. Various tales of the supernatural have circulated in the Wellington clubs over the years (Maclean 1994:89, 224) and several songs similarly feature wandering ghosts (e.g., 'No boots at all'*). One TTC song is based on a deer-culling tall tale about 'The golden-antlered stag', while Tony Nolan's 'The Big Sandfly'* features a monstrous incarnation of this bane of trampers:

Down the coast, near Jackson's Bay,
There lived a miner old and grey,
And to his hut so warm and dry
There came each night a Big Sandfly.

Other songs incorporate Biblical characters and settings into their tramping narratives. These supernatural, folkloric, and religious references were mainly utilised for comedic effect, yet by imagining the New Zealand wilderness in such terms, a layer of enchantment was added to singsongs. They articulated something of the timelessness that could be discovered by a fire late at night in isolated mountain settings.

Summary

This chapter has investigated tramping singsongs in the TTC and VUCTC as "performance events", describing and analysing their various ingredients. It has considered the basic components of the main activity—informal group singing governed by a flexible individual-group dynamic—and looked closely at the repertoire, performance features, song-making processes, and tramping-specific content involved. The chapter has concentrated on the most common type of singsong during the 1940s-1960s heyday: the spontaneous sessions that took place during truck journeys and ordinary tramping trips.

The chapter has developed the idea that this music-making was implicitly approached in a vernacular way. Tramping singsongs were vernacular domains whose possibilities were explored afresh by the specific personnel at each event in the name of "having fun". Repertoire was drawn from memory, "good voices" leading the way, the group following in free-wheeling unison. Different song forms and performance features added variety; medleys were created on the hoof. Trampers also exploited the liberty to insert spontaneous touches; "performance" events could become "creative" events and generate material of lasting significance. Various strategies enabled each group to establish its own territory of acceptable bawdy material, too. The vernacular empowered each gathering to make and keep the singsong "fun" on its own terms, enabling trampers to participate individually while identifying a collective space.

The chapter has also shown how the vernacular enabled the two club communities to make singsongs their own, especially in the repertoire. VUCTC singsongs included much ribaldry, coupled during the 1945-1955 period with an interest in left-wing songs and a preference for folk songs over popular songs, thereby supporting the membership's shared identity as free-thinking, critical students. TTC repertoire, by

contrast, was more eclectic and less ribald, thereby suiting the club's good reputation and its inclusiveness; members here found their "exclusive" identity via a much larger body of tramping-related songs than the varsity club. Each outfit also developed "home rules" to negotiate ambiguous parts of the repertoire, although members always retained the freedom to promote or revise them. The chapter has also noted how trampers vernacularised song resources to portray the shared tramping experience, the resulting items exploring themes of special significance—camaraderie, hardships endured, male-female interaction, the club context, and bush folklore. Tramping singsong performance dynamics, too, especially the emphasis on flexible individual-group relationships, also matched the core values of tramping itself. The next chapter will investigate why such music-making was so appealing in the 1940s-1960s period.

Chapter 5

Perceptions, extensions, and decline

The two decades after World War II were a heyday for singsongs in Wellington tramping clubs like the Tararua Tramping Club and Victoria University College Tramping Club. “Singing”, declared the July 1954 *Tararua Tramper*, “whether it be around a campfire, in our transports or at the traditional barndance at Tauwharenikau Hut, is an inseparable part of the art of tramping”. The TTC singsong culture even achieved some national public exposure with the LP recording *Bush Singalong* (Cleveland et al. [1963]). Yet singing interest in these clubs was slowly beginning to ebb away by the mid-1960s and, within ten years, singsongs, a once “inseparable” part of tramping, were becoming ever more infrequent. What accounts for the post-WWII singsong heyday? And why did singing subsequently decline? This chapter attempts to answer these questions by looking at the broader historical context and some supplementary aspects of the singsong culture. It focuses on the TTC, with supporting evidence gleaned from VUCTC and other club sources.

The chapter begins by discussing how these trampers valued singsongs during the heyday and then examines three key historical subtexts of the post-WWII scene: the return of the ex-servicemen; mixed tramping; and post-War economic prosperity. It then investigates *Bush Singalong* and a notable offshoot of the wider New Zealand tramping singsong culture—tramping song books—before surveying the later period. Although many factors contributed, the chapter argues that informal group singing in clubs like the TTC suited an era when tramping itself had special value as an adventurous, communal, mixed-gender experience. Importantly, the vernacular enabled informal group singing to embody the liberties trampers craved in the post-WWII decades. As the background imperatives changed, however, the singsong culture lost its impetus.

Perspectives from the singsong heyday

The ways in which singsongs were appraised and represented by trampers help us to understand their post-WWII popularity in clubs like the TTC and VUCTC. There is little dedicated written discourse about singsongs—no articles, for instance, in either

club's newsletters—but valuable insights can be gleaned from other material, which will be examined under the following subsections: commentary in club publications; visual self-representations; and the meanings accruing to term "tramping songs". Together they reveal the tacit "ideology" of the singsong culture.

Newsletter commentary

The newsletters and annuals of the Tararua Tramping Club provide a rich chronicle of club activities. Trip reports occasionally contain brief comments on singing (e.g., "After a grouse [i.e. excellent] stew, a campfire and sing-song, we crept into our sleeping bags", *TT* 10/1947). Lengthier responses, however, were often elicited by the bonfire sessions at the annual Sports Meetings held at the Catchpool Stream. The overall *mise-en-scène* of a horde of trampers—sometimes over 200 attendees—singing under the night skies around a roaring fire consistently inspired writers. One writes of:

> The swelling music, the tiers of faces dimly discernable in the flickering light, the forest trees grouped all around, stars up above, and as the logs pile on the fire, thousands of sparks eddying swiftly and rising in a whirling cloud into the darkness of the night. (*TT* 12/1936)

Such descriptions highlight something of the value of the tramping—and therefore, the singsong—experience for participants. Most obviously, they draw attention to the iconic place of fires in the tramping singsong culture. Appraisals of singsongs were sometimes implicit in portrayals of campfires. *Tararua Tramper* reports, for instance, note the enhancing effect of a fireside setting, how "a warm camp fire after dinner… brought forth the usual crop of songs" (7/1958) or how the "sing-song drifted with the smoke into the dark night sky" (4/1966). Campfires adorn the covers of some tramping song-books (see Plates 12, 17) and certain tramping-related songs depict idealised fireside scenarios (e.g., 'The brew song'[*]).

Fires were significant not only as sites for singsongs, but for symbolising the entire wilderness adventure. They were primary sources of light and warmth, a means to cook, boil water, and dry clothes, and social centres around which trampers gathered. The atavistic character of this symbolism is conveyed in a 1930s bonfire review:

> The great fire in the centre casts its ruddy glow…. Out of the fiery hollow clouds of dancing sparks rise above the trees to the untroubled stars…. This is… the tribal fire—how naturally we take it, slipping back through the centuries, from coal grates, gas flames, and glowing wire coils to the burning log. Obeying some deep instinct, we journey into the forest to escape these and come to this. (*TT* 12/1935)

The campfire, then, one of mankind's oldest and most basic tools, framed the tramping singsong as part of an escape back through time to a more primal mode of living.

Tararua Tramper reviews of the early Sports Meeting sessions also included critiques of vocal performance. Soloists were sometimes praised; club efforts occasionally decried. "A little more training in the singing line is indicated", one review observed (2/1944), while a later report stated "the desire of many to produce maximum sound with minimum of musical result was evident" (3/1949). Such commentary reflects the interest of a pre-War membership in more formalised music-making, like the "Glee Club" formed in 1929 and a "Glee Circle" formed in 1943. For the latter—intended "to arrest the serious decline in campfire and community singing"—it was announced that "song sheets would be provided, an accompanist on the piano was available and arrangements would be made for a leader" (*TT* 10/1943). Both attempts at organised singing soon lapsed, however. By the mid-1940s, it is reasonably clear that TTC trampers had turned away from music-making defined by "song sheets... an accompanist... and... a leader". The VUCTC, meanwhile, apparently always regarded "glee" activities with derision (Bagnall 1971:32).

Nonetheless, descriptions of singsongs in post-WWII *Tararua Tramper* reports continued to draw upon notions of normative musical standards, if only for ironic effect. These include references to "gurgling renditions" (9/1947), "the roars, gurgles and squeaks of our would-be operetta artists" (7/54), and "the Off-keynotes singing in seven sharps" (8/1954). Another rhetorical trope was to align trampers' singing with the noises of farm animals and native birds: e.g., "time passed quickly with singing... accompanied by the cries of three nosey keas" (2/1937). Such commentary acknowledged vocal shortcomings in a way that also highlighted aspects of the performance that had positive symbolic value: the unruly vocal textures released by the vernacular. "Roars, gurgles and squeaks" symbolised tramping's social ideal: individuals cooperating as a group,

but each free to sing unconstrained by scored arrangements, conductors, or aesthetic niceties. In singing, as in their bush adventures, trampers celebrated the possibilities of an egalitarian group activity.

Visual representations

Further insights into how trampers envisaged their singsongs are provided by the images of singing trampers that adorn song book covers, ephemera, and other tramping literature. Through their prominent placements, such images can be regarded as visual representations of how trampers saw themselves in the act of singing.[1] As only a few TTC-related instances have been traced, they are supplemented here with examples from other New Zealand clubs which suggest, indeed, that certain modes of self-representation were common across the New Zealand tramping scene in this period (see Plate 15).

Interestingly, these images reflect the shift away from organised singing during the 1940s, as discussed above in relation to the TTC. The two oldest Wellington examples show, respectively, trampers singing from a song book and surrounded by musical notes carefully arranged on staves, thereby hinting at the orderly objectives of such music-making. By contrast, all the later cartoons I have traced depict the singing tramper focused on self-entertainment and fun, fully indulging in the informal ambience of tramping.

These later drawings also incorporate motifs common to cartoons of trampers in New Zealand club publications: knobbly knees, unshaven faces, scruffy clothing, and hulking boots, and certain animal-like characteristics. As with certain tramping-related songs, they make fun of the slippage away from "civilized" standards of self-presentation that occurs with tramping. The sartorial and physical freedom of these singing trampers also echo the "wildness" of the singsong: in one memorable image, the act of singing itself becomes an open-throated roar.

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[1] By contrast, the period photographs contained in this ethnography are private snapshots that rarely appeared in club publications.

Plate 15: **Singing trampers**

From (clockwise from top): Hills and Valleys, no.2 (1936); Tararua Story (Greig 1946); The Southland Tramper (1958); Wellington Clubs 1980 Campfire Songsheet; H.V.T.C. Song Book (1983); A.U.T.C. Song Book (4th edition, ca.1971); A.U.T.C. Song Book (3rd edition, 1969).

The “tramping songs” genre

The Wellington tramping singsong culture of the post-WWII decades seems to have involved few specialised musical terms. Most examples already mentioned, like “Gretton songs” and “Purity League”, appear to have been limited to certain clubs and milieux, but one term achieved widespread currency: “tramping songs”. This expression, used in Wellington clubs from at least 1936 (e.g., *TT* 8/1936; *In Search of New Zealand*, 1936, no.2, p.52), was often employed by interviewees as a kind of catchall for the overall singsong culture. Of course, the term gains special significance by incorporating a word—“tramping”—that serves as a key marker of shared identity for trampers (see Chapter 3). Its application and meaning thus provide an important perspective on the club music-making under consideration.

“Tramping songs” principally (but not exclusively) refers to songs about tramping, i.e. items which depict tramping scenarios, express shared attitudes, and use tramping slang. The term was a self-identifying stamp on the music-making that conferred special value on homemade repertoire. While tramping singsongs themselves were never given a generic name, perhaps because they were relatively indistinguishable from singsongs in other contexts, the songs were recognised as unique and numerous enough to justify their own name. Yet “tramping songs” was also freely applied to other core singsong repertoire. A section labelled “Tramping Songs” in the ca.1943 mimeographed ‘Tararua song book’ (Plate 12), for instance, mostly features bawdy and drinking songs (e.g., ‘Samuel Hall’[*], ‘Bible stories’[*]). Interviewees themselves acknowledged the label was often extended beyond tramping-related material. Some songs have obvious crossover relevance (e.g., British mountaineering songs), but the inclusion of bawdy and roughhouse songs indicates the special value placed on boundary-pushing repertoire. The appropriation of bawdy material into the “tramping song” genre can be usefully compared with genres like “army songs” and “rugby songs”, yet the connotations are far milder. Ribaldry was regarded more as a potentiality of tramping singsongs than their *raison d’être*. Nonetheless, its claiming under the “tramping song” label can be seen as yet another making-our-own act on the part of these trampers.

In conclusion, the newsletter commentary on singsongs, visual representations of singing trampers, and meanings of the term “tramping songs”, convey a strong sense of

the tacit "ideology" of singsongs in the 1940s-1960s heyday—particularly in regard to the TTC. An important shift evidently occurred in this club during the 1940s. Before this, formal music-making had a certain following, but members eventually came to fully embrace a rougher style already enjoyed in the VUCTC. Informal singing expressed core tramping values: the unruly vocal textures matched the individual autonomy, participatory freedoms, and exuberant physicality that was cherished in the hills; the term "tramping song" expressed pride in their exclusive bush repertoire and acknowledged a taste for boundary-pushing material; and both tramping and singsongs shared the campfire as a symbol of timeless self-sufficiency. Now we can turn to the larger question of why this musical culture so flourished during the post-WWII decades.

Historical explanations

Singsongs were integral to the post-WWII style of tramping in the Wellington region. Woven into trip structures and annual club calendars, singsongs were (as discussed above), perceived to embody the basic values of the recreation. The flourishing of singsongs during these years is thus intrinsically linked to the general boom in post-War tramping. Notwithstanding that every tramper has their own personal motivations to head for the mountains, certain historical subtexts—already touched on in previous chapters—provide compelling explanations for tramping's appeal at this time. The following sections discuss three relevant areas: the return of the ex-servicemen; mixed tramping; and New Zealand's economic prosperity from the 1950s onwards.

The return of the ex-servicemen

Around twenty percent of the TTC and VUCTC memberships saw active service overseas during WWII and, upon returning in 1945 and 1946, these men resumed tramping with a zeal that invigorated and transformed the Wellington scene. Other ex-soldiers enthusiastically adopted the recreation. What motivated these soldiers back fresh from the battlefield? One ex-serviceman I interviewed recalled tramping's appeal:

Pip Piper: I just wanted to enjoy civilian life… I was reasonably fit and it was the camaraderie that helped. It was completely different camaraderie to the Air Force… [where] you were supporting each other to survive in some ways. It was a bit grim and yet looking back we

> were just so bloody lucky to escape all sorts of little things. So this was another challenge that was a lot safer….

For ex-servicemen like Pip, who had spent years separated from their families and faced the challenge of reintegrating into New Zealand society, tramping was a useful transitional activity. As a highly physical exercise in self-reliance carried out in small comradely groups, tramping replicated certain positive aspects of frontline combat. Being far less stressful and dangerous, though, it possibly had some remedial value for the many soldiers who returned suffering psychological after-effects of combat (cf. Parr 1995:14-21).

The TTC hut-building boom of 1946-1961 was another sign of a camp life or army hut approach being converted into peacetime tramping terms. Weekend hut construction required considerable organisation, discipline, and energy. These projects also channelled a yearning for constructive renewal in the wider membership, among trampers who had undergone their own forms of separation, loss, and postponement of personal growth and opportunity due to six years of war.

Another positive aspect of military life that could be carried into the mountains was informal singing. It can be considered as part of what Les Cleveland calls the "apparatus of good cheer", by which WWII veterans could cast off unwanted memories and renew their camaraderie (quoted in Parr 1995:147). While singing was already an integral part of Wellington tramping by 1945, ex-servicemen injected a new irreverence and vitality. The raucous Tauherenikau Hut "Welcome Home" of 1946 set the tone for several decades to come. Soldiers also introduced a fresh appetite for impudent parody: songwriters Harold Gretton and Tony Nolan were both ex-servicemen.

The predominantly-male tramping trips of the immediate post-War years also facilitated the transfer of bawdy military repertoire. Yet, given the risqué connotations that the "tramping song" genre had *already* acquired (see above), such songs clearly found a receptive niche in tramping communities. What, then, was the broader appeal of this repertoire? For young men, ribaldry may have served similar functions as for soldiers, operating as vehicles of sexual fantasy and comic relief for men with limited possibilities for female contact, as well as providing cautionary narratives about

venereal disease and other facts of life (Cleveland 1994:79-89). Student trampers had most opportunities for performing such songs and, aptly, one of the most popular post-War items depicts a male student cavorting with ‘Kathusalem’[*], the “harlot of Jerusalem”, but who nonetheless pays a price for his debauches:

> He laid that jade upon her bum and shooting like a Gatling gun
> He sowed the seed of many a son, within the fair Kathusalem.
> ...
> The wily jade she knew her part, she closed her cheeks and blew a fart
> He flew as straight as any dart, far out beyond Jerusalem.

The personal influence of ex-servicemen on impressionable male students was another factor. Bawdy songs were an initiation into a world of experienced older males and their performance became a proclamation of manhood among one’s peers.

For the broader tramping community, too, men and women alike, bawdy songs of one sort or another were understood as complementary to the adventure of tramping. Out in the bush, in exclusively adult company, there was always the possibility of having one’s horizons broadened. Despite the potentially offensive nature of some songs, the vernacular flexibility of the singsong format meant that clubs and tramping parties could determine their own acceptable territory of bawdiness. Even if boundaries were occasionally pushed too far for some people’s comfort, was this not akin to the temporary hardships of bad weather and grimy bush huts? Such experiences could even be regarded as “character forming” (and one could always avoid future trips with offending individuals). Ultimately, it is unsurprising that so much of the ex-servicemen’s repertoire found a new lease among recreationalists who deliberately undertook tough adventures to be experienced without complaint.

Mixed tramping

Although predominantly male in the immediate post-WWII period, more women were taking up tramping in Wellington by the 1950s and the gender balance of tramping clubs was changing. Fraternising and courting among young trampers—generally the most enthusiastic and active cohorts of clubs like the TTC (see *TT* 4/1965)—subsequently increased to the extent that, as we have seen, male-female interaction became a major

theme of tramping-related songs. This social effervescence was not limited to tramping, however, but reflected a broader trend.

For New Zealand, as with many other countries, the end of WWII was followed by a period of recovery and growth that included a fifteen-year long “baby boom”. Couples whose family plans had been interrupted by the War made up for lost time, while new couples began marrying at ever-younger ages. The result was a sixty percent increase in birth rates above pre-War levels (King 2003:412). Certain cultural fads can also be linked to the baby boom, including an ideology of “romantic domesticity” promulgated in 1950s Hollywood movies and women’s magazines, which promoted marriage and family life as romantic ideals (Belich 2001:491-492). Social dancing—for which there was a post-War “craze”—also served as a key vehicle for socialising and courtship (Thomas 2004:121; White 2007).

Yet the baby boom was also accompanied by a resurgent moral conservatism. Traditional gender roles—father as breadwinner, mother as housewife—which had been put aside during the War were reaffirmed in the typical baby-boom family. Marriage remained a strong institution, with divorce rates rising only gradually before the late-1960s (Phillips 1981:56-62). Furthermore, public discourse became preoccupied with questions of moral propriety. Rumours of teenage “orgies” in the Lower Hutt milkbar scene in 1953, for instance, prompted a government inquiry with a copy of the final report, which found widespread evidence of “immorality... among younger groups”, being distributed to every New Zealand household (Mazengarb et al. 1954:18; cf. Yska 1993:63-84). Despite considerable existing censorship of popular music and movies, the report’s recommendations that this be increased were soon effected (Belich 2001:505).

Public attitudes toward tramping were also remained slightly clouded due to its mixed sleeping arrangements. Needless to say, there was no government inquiry into tramping. Wellington trampers I interviewed all observed that little sexual activity ever occurred on trips: tramping had been “extremely chaste”. One key factor was the lack of reliable contraception in New Zealand prior to the 1960s (Smyth 2000:94). An ex-student told me that unplanned pregnancy was regarded as a “terrifying prospect” among her circle (Beverley Price pers. comm. 13/6/2008). Tramping was “chaste” virtually by default,

too, given the lack of privacy afforded by huts and the exhausting, sweaty nature of the wilderness journey.

The social scene of post-WWII tramping in Wellington, then, was stimulated by both the lively atmosphere of the baby-boom era and tramping's suitability for mixed socialising during a morally-conservative era: clubs provided a pool of friends and acquaintances, while trips allowed for low-key interaction and yet remained group-centred, free from explicit romantic or sexual expectations. Moreover, given that one sees "people at their best and their worst while tramping" (see Chapter 3), some of the realities that lay behind "romantic domesticity" could be previewed at a time when marriage was still considered a lifelong proposition.

Tramping singsongs flourished as sites of mixed socialising—it can be proposed—for analogous reasons. They provided for some one-on-one interaction but, unlike social dancing, say, where coupling was structured into the activity, were fundamentally group-orientated. Singsongs created a relatively neutral social space. (Even the hut barn dances, with their emphasis on *group* dancing, followed this pattern.) The vernacular liberties of repertoire selection also permitted themes of desire, love, marriage, and sex to be bandied around in a playful and provocative way, with risqué material providing an earthy contrast to government-approved popular song. Revealingly, too, some of the most repeated tramping items were cautionary tales about pregnancy, notably 'Aidle-o boy'[*] (see CD5), a traditional Irish parable about the personal freedoms lost through the birth of a baby:

> Now all you young fellows who some day may marry
> Just take my advice and leave women alone,
> For by the Lord Harry if ever you marry,
> She'll give you a baby and swear it's your own.

This song is described by one historian as "almost an anthem of the post-war years" in Wellington clubs (Maclean 1994:214); even more, it features in almost every New Zealand tramping song book. Yet the broader repertoire palette from which trampers drew also ensured that these themes never became overly conspicuous. Ultimately, singsongs were about "having fun", not being reminded of such social subtexts. "Songs were just songs", some trampers assured me.

"A deep draught of realism"

The post-WWII period of recovery and growth also influenced tramping clubs based in urban areas like Wellington in other significant ways. To understand these, we must revisit the idea presented in Chapter 3 that tramping is a "liminoid" experience. Victor Turner uses the term "liminoid" to denote quasi-ritualistic activities in modern societies where people "play" with alternative realities and identities to those of everyday life (1982:20-60). With its challenging wilderness journeys far from urban areas, tramping is a good example of liminoid phenomenon. But what do trampers find so particularly satisfying about tramping? One early answer to this question—which is a perennial for trampers themselves—is given in a TTC article about a hut-building project:

> The significance of all this amazing zest and hearty investment of energy is surely this: that to-day most of us are by our occupations cut off from the deep satisfaction of real and tangible achievements and the pleasure of creating with our own hands a product of that old cunning by which our ancestors defeated the raging elements. So, like big children, we enjoy a very primitive delight in making in the wilderness a house naked in the essentials of roof, walls and hearth. We are playing an old game for the fun of it, and to give back to life that savour and balance the complexities and inflations of modern ways have robbed it of. Are we over-sheltered inside the hot-air dens of modern civilisation? Then, the antidote is a deep draught of realism, of mud and iron, of immoderate cursing and immoderate laughter, of smoky fires and the sweat of human porterage, of friendly aid in simple tasks. The hut-builders were satisfying a primal need of the hungry spirit. Indeed, their journeys may be looked upon as a sort of spiritual homing to one of the choicest of the great salt-licks that every human being in the herd must visit to keep life sane. (J.H.S. 1932)

Trampers of the 1920s and 1930s, like these, were only one or two generations removed from the colonial era, and thus uniquely placed to appreciate how modernity—with its industrial division of labour, mass consumerism, and modern conveniences—was displacing the self-sufficient frontier mode of life. For deskbound individuals in downtown Wellington, the mountains beckoning from across the harbour were a kind of "playground" where bracing realities could be rediscovered. The following sections discuss key factors in the post-WWII era pertaining to tramping's "deep draught of realism".

The forty-hour week

The contrast provided by tramping to life in Wellington—being, as the capital, the most bureaucratic of all New Zealand centres—intensified during WWII, due to the 1935-1949 Labour Government's state expansion and the war effort. The city had New Zealand's highest proportion of workers in office and other sedentary jobs: in 1951, around one third of male workers and one half of female workers fell into these categories, proportions which had further increased by 1961.[2] For this workforce, the advent of the forty-hour working week was a crucial change for those with a nascent interest in tramping.

Once an entire weekend's freedom became available in 1946, tramping's appeal suddenly increased. In the process, the character of mainstream clubs like the TTC was transformed. People from all walks of life now joined up, eager to explore the possibilities, newcomers who were less in thrall to the conservative founding generations and embraced the more liberated style of tramping exemplified by pre-War cliques like "the Scum". Given the skill base of the TTC membership was also expanding, hut building and maintenance could become central activities (where building had previously often been contracted out). While the ex-servicemen's return provided the spark for the construction boom, it was sustained by young trampers who were keen, willing, and able to devote their weekends to such tasks.

The TTC's social focus consequently shifted from the clubrooms to the bush, with some musical activities being dropped (e.g., glee groups) and others transformed (e.g., clubroom "flannel dances" becoming hut "barn dances"). Informal singsongs became the main musical paradigm. Tramping represented an escape from office, shop, and factory existence, and singsongs were also a release from instructions, deadlines, and hierarchies. In this vernacular domain of music-making, people were free to shape time to their own ends and make their own songs, patching together repertoire—like the huts—and handing them on to new cohorts. The self-sufficiency of the singsong culture, especially its "tramping songs", became a source of modest pride.

[2] Proportions calculated by combining statistics for professional, technical and related workers; managers, administrators and officials; and clerical, office, and related workers (Department of Statistics 1954:82, 1965:55).

Weekends in the wilderness

These trampers also continued to value the strenuous exercise provided by tramping during the post-WWII decades. To lift a pack upon one's back and slog through bush or build huts was physically invigorating after spending a week behind a desk. It renewed a sense of bodily existence. A major factor in the international rise of recreational walking, according to Rebecca Solnit, has been "the disembodiment of everyday life" brought about by modern transportation and other conveniences (2000:256-260, 267). "Walking", she argues, "returns the body to its original limits" (29). Furthermore, tramping provided liberation from urban dress codes and—for men—the need for daily shaving. The body could thus "go wild" to some extent. The vernacular domains of singsongs and barn dances accommodated this physical wildness, too, whether in singing oneself hoarse, exuberant percussion, or marathon 'Shoo fly' sessions. Even the contented shoulder-to-shoulder press of a sit-down singsong meant an easy acceptance of others' bodily presence. Such dynamism and intimacy contrast markedly with the stasis, for instance, of the glee format (see Plate 15, top left).

Furthermore, tramping—for those who spent so much time inside—continued to have special meaning as an experience of nature under open skies. Mountain ridges plunging into vertiginous depths, the cold edge of a mountain breeze, the fragrance of tussock, the roar of a river in the night: such sensations marked the special wonder of tramping's "spiritual salt-lick". The beauty of the New Zealand mountains, however, while inspiring much tramping poetry was a curiously undeveloped theme in tramping-related songs performed in the TTC and VUCTC. Significantly, one of the few songs openly-worshipful of nature, Tony Nolan's 'The Arawata'*, was only ever performed solo by the composer and never otherwise sung in his presence:

> Oh you lovely Arawata,
> I'll forever be your slave,
> Till a cairn upon your shingle,
> Marks a lonely climber's grave.

Nonetheless, the mountains form an ever-present backdrop in the songs and interviewees sometimes singled-out certain isolated phrases—like "…summertime was nearly over, Tararua mists hung round …" or "…beyond the blue mountains the snows

are still shining…"—for their evocativeness. The modest scale of these poetic images was perhaps ideal: sufficient to trigger associations for singsong participants without becoming a lengthier, more subjective rumination. Some interviewees told me that trampers preferred others to modestly cherish their feelings about the mountains while on trips rather than engage in effusive verbal appreciation.[3]

"Three thousand feet above worry level"

The way of life for New Zealanders "in the herd" (as the 1932 article put it) also changed dramatically after WWII, providing fresh imperatives for tramping's quasi-ritualistic liminoid adventure (on "liminoid", see Chapter 3). From the 1950s to 1970s, New Zealand experienced unparalleled economic growth due to high international demand for wool and meat exports, while various public works projects boosted employment. New suburbs appeared on city outskirts to cope with the rising population, a suburbia colloquially dubbed "Nappy Valley" for its predominance of baby-boom families (Belich 2001:489). In the Wellington area, the population effectively doubled in thirty years (see Figure 2). The city sprouted new suburban developments in Johnsonville and Newlands, while satellite centres were established in nearby Upper Hutt and Porirua. Household incomes soared, too, creating unprecedented affluence for the average New Zealand family, now able to afford modern household appliances, leisure equipment, and private motorcars (Dalley 2005:310-312). New Zealand was rapidly becoming what would later be called the "half-gallon, quarter-acre, pavlova paradise" (Mitchell 1972).[4]

In many respects, the post-WWII tramping boom in Wellington was part of this broader prosperity. New opportunities for weekend recreation like tramping were one of its fruits, while the TTC's hut-building drive echoes the suburban expansion of the period: in each case, the foundations of a stable, peaceful future were being laid. But tramping also offered an escape from the materialistic conformity of the "pavolva paradise". As one person told me:

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[3] Don Brown noted, for example, that people could get somewhat "annoyed if you did express appreciation of things of natural beauty… it was better to keep it inside" on VUCTC trips (interview B).
[4] This expression refers to the standard beer flagon; the standard suburban lot; and a dessert made with cream and eggs.

Don Brown: [Tramping was] a city thing, people rebelling against the city and suburban lifestyle.... To get out of this bloody city and away from the office and get into the hills. You know, "three thousand feet above worry level"... seldom did you think, about your worries in the real world. Great escapism. [B]

Adventuring in the mountains also had exclusive cachet: it was a way of distinguishing oneself from "the herd". Furthermore, the egalitarian social basis of tramping was appealingly free of the roles, hierarchies, and responsibilities of workplace and "Nappy Valley" alike (except for quasi-leadership roles). Mountain adventures probably held special significance for young unmarrieds enjoying a level of physical vitality and personal freedom available only during that phase of life between leaving school and starting a family. Out in the bush, these young men and women could defer or at least lose sight of 1950s-style pre-prepared futures and "find themselves" as self-sufficient individuals in the company of equals. The core gesture of tramping—of *movement* through the wilderness—was a powerful expression of this liberty.

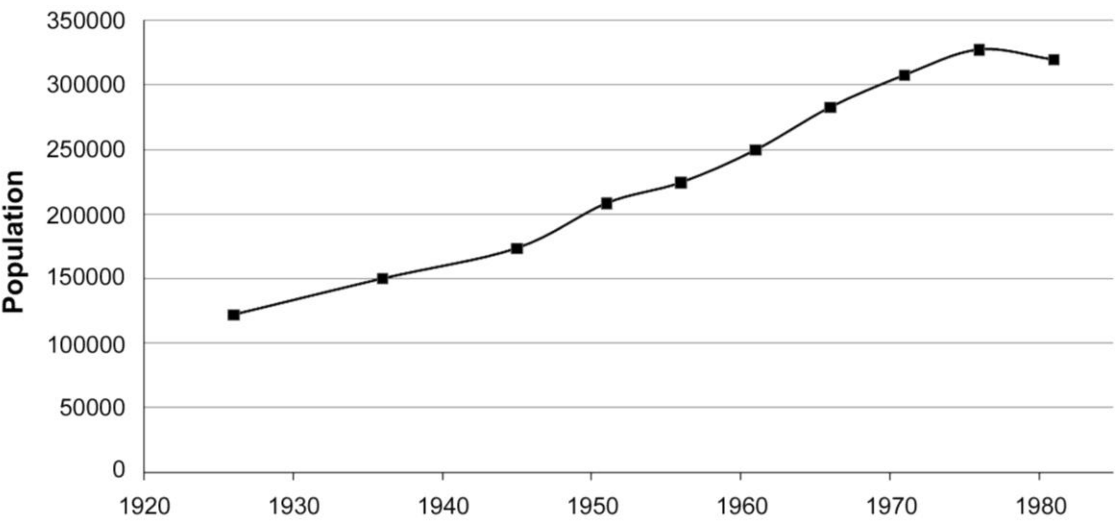


Figure 2: **Population of Wellington urban areas, 1926-1981**

This chart combines figures across the greater Wellington area (Wellington, Hutt Valley, Porirua) from the ten national censuses held between 1926 and 1981.

The vernacular domains of the post-WWII singsongs were also free of fixed roles or responsibilities. Here, people could "roar, gurgle and squeak" in rough synchrony. Tramping-related songs, too, with their images of trampers pushing through the bush, snow, and rain, were celebrations of movement, while others offered humorous

reminders about the perils of marriage, babies, and other freedom-diminishing phenomena. Overall, the singsongs were a musical embodiment of tramping's escape to a reality where individual liberties were constrained only by the demands of the natural environment, the limits of the human body, and the maintenance of group egalitarianism.

In conclusion, then, Wellington club tramping and the associated singsongs were stimulated by various interconnected post-WWII phenomena, such as the return of ex-servicemen, the baby boom, and the economic prosperity. We can also see that tramping clubs were evolving communities. Most single trampers would not remain unmarried and without family responsibilities forever, especially given the strong social side of clubs like the TTC. If family life spelled a tramping hiatus for these trampers, more young unmarrieds were always filling the club ranks. For the tramping singsong culture, this turnover was both a strength—the repertoire being maintained by new cohorts—and, as we shall see, a potential weakness. The rising affluence of New Zealand society also contained seeds of the singsong culture's decline. Before discussing these matters, though, several offshoots of the music-making during the prime period must be considered.

Bush Singalong

In 1963, the New Zealand tramping singsong culture acquired an unprecedented degree of public exposure with the release of an LP of tramping songs: *Bush Singalong* (Cleveland et al. [1963]; see Plate 16). This LP was a significant development in several respects, revealing both the ambitions of TTC songwriter Tony Nolan and certain trends within New Zealand popular music. *Bush Singalong* is also of interest in demonstrating certain processes attending the extension of products of the vernacular (i.e. tramping songs) into the commercial domain.

Bush Singalong was commissioned by Kiwi Records,[5] a division of a Wellington publishing firm specialising in New Zealand subject, A.H. & A.W. Reed (Dart 1994). Founded in 1957, Kiwi initially focused on Māori music and educational discs, but broadened its scope considerably after broadcaster Tony Vercoe was appointed label

[5] Although using other names over the years, "Kiwi Records" is employed here for the sake of simplicity.

head in 1959, coming to include folk music, brass bands, art music, and other genres. Tony described the origins of the *Bush Singalong* project:

> Through contact with the Education Department in Wellington... I had met Tony Nolan.... He talked to me enthusiastically about his interest in... songs popular with trampers and general outdoors types... [and] presented a five inch reel to me.... I was used to trying to look past the shortcomings of such audition offerings and... believed I could see a spark of potential in the idea. (email, 1/4/2008)

Nolan had made a vinyl disc of tramping songs already, using a local "process recording" facility. The resulting *Tony and the Tararuas* EP [1961], featuring TTC vocalists and scratch band (piano, guitar, banjo-ukulele, mouth organ mainly performed by "ear players"), included Nolan's parody 'Too-roo-loo-roo-lay'* and 'Aidle-o boy'* (CD5). A few dozen copies were distributed in the club.

Plate 16: ***Bush Singalong* (1963)**
Michael Brown

Both tramping recordings were made possible by a propitious expansion of the local record industry in the late-1950s (Staff and Ashley 2002:57-61). The singsong culture itself had reached a fullness of repertoire by this time that justified such ventures. Yet these recordings depended largely on Tony Nolan's singular enthusiasm: there have

been no other attempts to make tramping songs into a commercial product in New Zealand. His background and possible motivations thus require some discussion.

Tony Nolan was born and grew up in Wellington (Woodcock 2003-2004), being orphaned in the midst of the Depression and raised by neighbours. After military service in WWII, he held various government jobs, undertook further service in Malaya, later worked in Antarctica, and then became a non-fiction writer. He also remained a life-long bachelor. "He was an interesting guy", John Gates told me, "never settled down" (interview). Nolan also seems to have been a liminal figure in the TTC, contributing greatly as an instructor, writer, and singsong enthusiast, but often undertaking solo trips and becoming regarded as "a bit touchy". He was made a Life Member in 1979. Song-writing was one of Nolan's special niches and it is logical that, as his songs accumulated, he came to view them as more than just "weekend affairs". *Bush Singalong* mostly consists of Nolan's own pieces or adaptations of these: the LP was an assertion of creative ambition and proprietorship.

To capture an authentic atmosphere, Nolan originally proposed *Bush Singalong* be recorded at an actual hut. "But, of course, I could see that that could never be marketed", Tony Vercoe explained to me: "It just couldn't be in that rough form" (interview A). With the assistance of two Kiwi artists, songwriter-musician Ken Avery and vocalist Les Cleveland (himself a mountaineer), a compromise was achieved: a studio simulation complete with the sounds of trudging boots, burbling streams, and dialogue. Side A finds the trampers at a campfire session with a bushman, before proceeding to Side B's barn dance. Vocalists included Cleveland, broadcaster Alex Veysey, Nolan and other TTC members, and others recruited by Kiwi (including composer Jenny McLeod). Backing was provided by local session musicians.

The intermingling of song, verbal comedy, and bush ambience on the resulting LP (see CD6) helps place the somewhat esoteric tramping material into an explanatory context; liner notes supply more background information. The performances are also carefully judged to evoke a singsong atmosphere: the singing tuneful without being conspicuously polished; the choruses sung in simple unison; the backing understated (and far tighter than the "ear playing" on *Tony and the Tararuas*). Some of the acting is wooden, but

Cleveland stands out as the drawling bushman and the whole approach is fairly innovative for the period.

Bush Singalong's title is also interesting. The term "singalong" had only recently come to prominence through American producer Mitch Miller's bestselling LPs (*OED*), which invited listeners to "sing along" with the record (Marmorstein 2007:251-253). *Bush Singalong* implies a similar purpose, with vocalists sometimes prompting a background chorus to join in. By simulating a real singsong for listeners to create their own version at home, the LP represents an intriguing overlap between participatory and mediated music-making.

Part of the *Bush Singalong*'s appeal for Kiwi was the ready market provided by outdoor recreationists, but the record was also considered to have wider potential:

> ***Tony Vercoe:*** We'd already had a few sorts of hints… with Ken Avery's songs, Peter Cape's songs… "kiwi" stuff, and… Les Cleveland with his WWII songs. Idiomatic stuff. These all did well, so that was encouraging. *Bush Singalong* was more kiwi-idiom stuff….

These recordings—all advertised on *Bush Singalong*'s back cover—together with the work of Rod Derrett and others, comprise a "kiwi idiom" genre that briefly flourished in local popular music from the late-1950s to mid-1960s. Marked by the use of recognisably New Zealand accents, slang, and humour, the genre was stimulated by various factors, including broadcasting policies and the creative acumen of labels like Kiwi. The genre's emergence perhaps also indicates a key moment of the "pavlova paradise" epoch, when New Zealanders began to accept local products of the vernacular—albeit often in heavily caricatured forms—in their popular culture. Another sign of this acceptance was the huge concurrent success of deer-culler Barry Crump's idiomatic novels, beginning with *A Good Keen Man* (1960), a book that inspired two *Bush Singalong* tracks: 'A good keen man' and 'A good keen girl'. The LP's commissioning, then, shows how products of the vernacular (like tramping songs) may be exploited for having a marketable "local" flavour.

Bush Singalong was considered a success for Kiwi, receiving airplay on public radio and selling around 1000 copies (Tony Vercoe, interview). No reviews have been traced,

but I obtained a sense of its reception among Wellington trampers from interviews. Many interviewees had copies of and enjoyed *Bush Singalong*: “It got some songs, significant songs, in a pretty nice sort of manner”, John Gates concluded (interview). Some former varsity trampers were scathing, however:

> ***Don Brown:*** Here are these people putting on a performance. It isn’t a natural sort of evolution.... Around the campfire or in the truck people just start singing for the love of singing. Here... it just seems false... like exposing the secrets of the Masonic Lodge. [B]

Such comments underline the value placed upon singsongs as spontaneous, self-shaped, and exclusive music-making—aspects impossible to replicate with a recording. *Bush Singalong*’s verisimilitude was also questioned. Some interviewees noted that the LP sounded little like an actual singsong or barn dance (compare CD1, CD6; also Plates 15, 16). Others also felt the dialogue was “a bit corny”. Indeed, the local accents are often exaggerated and certain songs were probably written to order by Nolan, so as to introduce more typically-“kiwi” topics (e.g., satires about farming), revealing a deliberate “localization” of the singsong culture for commercial ends. *Bush Singalong* features no bawdiness, either, not even of the TTC-friendly *Tony and the Tararuas* sort. Tony Vercoe admits there was a need “to placate... the Reed hierarchy” in such matters: the publisher’s directors were conservative Christians known to bowdlerise their authors’ excursions into blasphemy, swearing, and sex (McLean, G. 2007:50-51, 170-176); the public radio auditioning process also had to be considered.

Overall, then, *Bush Singalong* demonstrates what may occur when products of the vernacular are extended into commercial popular music. While the “local” flavour of the tramping material was identified as a marketable quality, the imperative to create a saleable product required major transformations in content and performance style, and intensification of genre markers. But the LP also shows the influence the vernacular may have when “elements... escape... and become part of the mass culture” (Lantis 1960:204). Two tracks were later covered by the group When the Cat’s Been Spayed for their CD *Down the Hall* (1993). As part of the “kiwi idiom” genre, the LP also helped pioneer a comic sensibility (laconic, mocking, ironic) that blossomed in the later work of local humorists like John Clarke (“Fred Dagg”) and Ginette MacDonald (“Lynn of Tawa”), and music groups like The Front Lawn and The Topp Twins. Several Nolan

and Gretton lyrics appear in the "classic kiwiana" section of an anthology of local comic verse (Ricketts and Roberts 1998). *Bush Singalong* has thus been a vehicle through which the tramping singsong culture has had a small but tangible influence on New Zealand popular culture, although this has never previously been noted by local music writers (who have also largely missed the significance of the "kiwi idiom" genre).

A third and final Tony Nolan EP recording, *Ski Singalong* (Mary Larkin et al. [1965]), followed on HMV. According to interviewees, the shift in labels was probably due to Nolan being "a bit hacked off" about losing creative control of the Kiwi album. *Ski Singalong* returned to the relatively straightforward *Tony and the Tararuas* approach, given polish by professional singers and a cabaret band. The EP achieved much less profile and commercial success than *Bush Singalong*, however, perhaps discouraging further recording on Nolan's part. Nonetheless, all these ventures were probably crucial stepping stones to his later writing career.

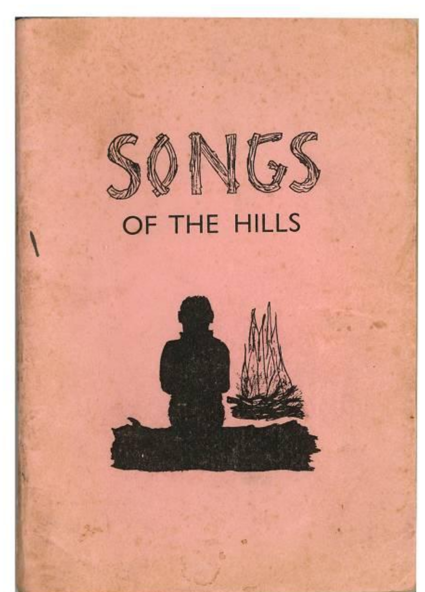
Tramping song books

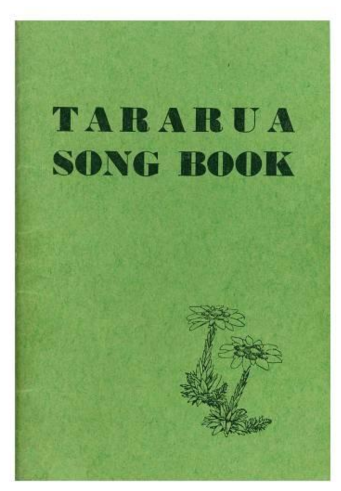
Since the late-1930s, at least twenty-seven song books have been created in the New Zealand tramping and mountaineering scene (see Appendix 1). These show that the singsong culture of the Wellington clubs was in fact a regional manifestation of a national phenomenon. The books now provide a key source of primary evidence about different club repertoires and are also interesting as making-our-own artefacts in their own right. Furthermore, they help chart an emerging sense of "tradition" in the post-WWII singsong culture of clubs like the TTC.

These song books are a widespread phenomenon, with many clubs throughout New Zealand creating their own versions; other compilations are unaffiliated. Most date from the post-WWII decades, suggesting that the Wellington tramping boom and associated singsong culture was part of a national trend. This timeframe also links the tramping song books with a wider surge in grassroots song-book making in New Zealand.[6] Many New Zealand school, college, scout, guide, and university student compilations were created during these years, probably due to falling commodity costs and the general

[6] No study of these grassroots song-books has been published, but, of the 105 examples in the writer's collection, few fall outside the 1940s-1980s period.

economic prosperity. (By contrast, pre-WWII examples were generally only created by groups with special means, like private schools.) Tramping song books are distinguished from those of other groups, however, by their mode of fabrication. Apart from a few professionally-typeset compilations, most were typed, printed—mimeographed, photocopied, or duplicated with typewriter carbons—and then bound by trampers themselves (see Plate 17). They thus fall into the print-culture category of “kitchen-table” publishing: the creation of books or ephemera by people in their own homes or using workplace equipment (Preston 1995:xvi-xviii).





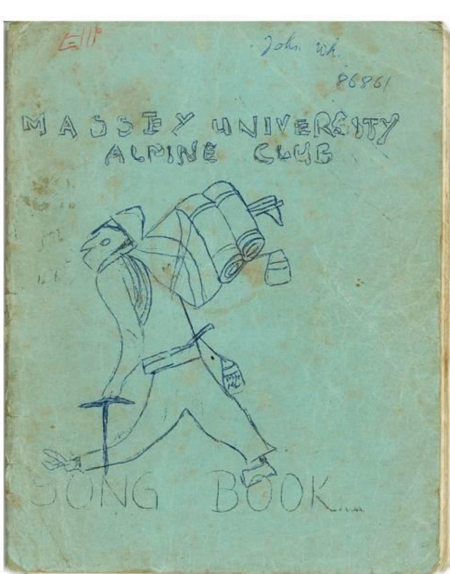


Plate 17: **Tramping song books, 1950s to 1970s**

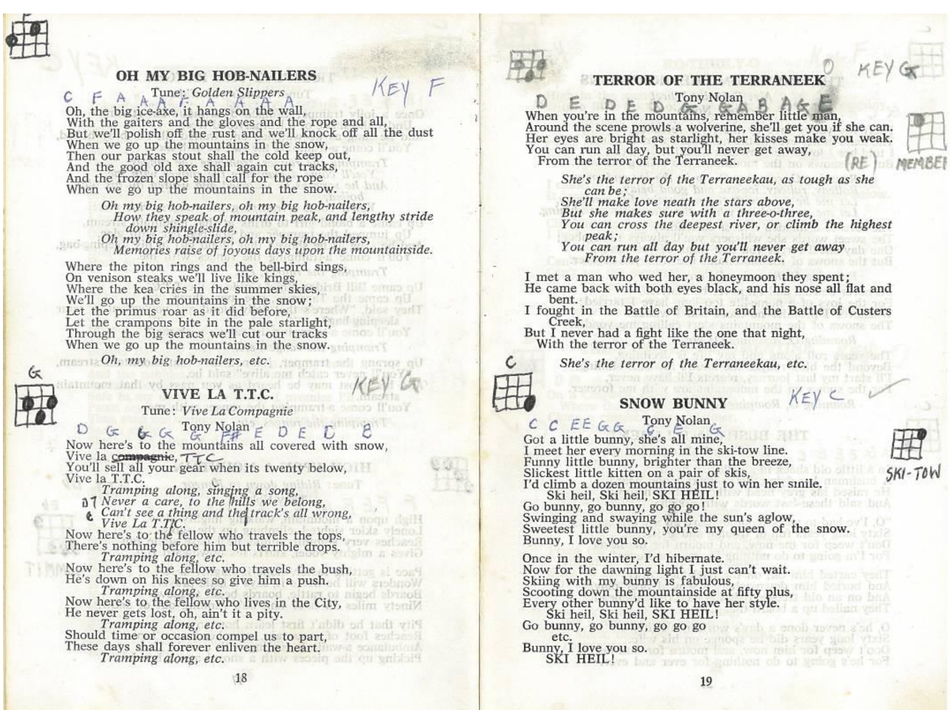
Michael Brown

Most tramping compilations I have traced are fairly modest productions, small in size, and containing between forty to eighty song texts (although some feature over 200), few featuring any music notation. But the "kitchen-table" approach enabled tramping clubs to vernacularise their song books in many ways. Titles often proclaim them as club publications, along with emblems, mock-heraldic crests, cartoons, and other quirky touches. Their basis in specific club singsong idiocultures in different parts of New Zealand is also reflected in the unique repertoire mixtures they contain, which combine "public" material, "latent" songs—typically including many of the same bawdy or roughhouse items categorised as "tramping songs" in Wellington—and various tramping-related songs, some known throughout New Zealand and others more region- or club-specific. The status of the song books as products of the vernacular domain is also apparent in their general disregard for copyright. Songwriters are seldom identified, either, with local tramping songs mostly left uncredited—apparently a source of consternation for Tony Nolan in at least one case (Lindsay Cuthbertson, interview).

New Zealand tramping anthologies were probably created with various purposes in mind. As noted in Chapter 4, most TTC and VUCTC interviewees considered their central purpose was for "brushing up" on songs at home or during trips. But other Wellington clubs apparently sometimes used them as standard performance aids. Lindsay Cuthbertson, who compiled several editions of *Songs of the Hills* for the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club—they were also made available in the TTC—told me that their bus trips featured semi-organised sessions in which trampers sang from individual copies (interview). Like several other tramping anthologies, *Songs of the Hills* features a numbering system that presumably enabled swift transitions between items.

Song books could also serve supporting functions at singsongs. Several Wellington interviewees noted, for instance, how an index could provide a useful trove of possibilities—and some compilations are appended with lists of extra titles probably for this reason. Individual copies of song books reveal other uses. "A book has an organic history as an object in time that preserves the marks of its readers as it grows old", observes Lydia Wevers (2010:257). Tramping song books likewise can bear witness to practical usage, carrying not only evocative signs of time spent at bush huts or drinking sessions—grimy pages, sellotaped spines, splatters and rings—but also special musical

marginalia: song titles appended to indexes, chord changes jotted over lyrics, and fresh parodies scrawled around page edges (see Plate 18). The leftover spaces of these books were thus treated as a kind of "vernacular margin" by their owners. Recognising this tendency, several tramping compilations even allocate blank pages for new creations.



OH MY BIG HOB-NAILERS

Tune: *Golden Slippers*

Oh, the big ice-axe, it hangs on the wall,
With the gaiters and the gloves and the rope and all,
But we'll polish off the rust and we'll knock off all the dust
When we go up the mountains in the snow,
Then our parkas stout shall the cold keep out,
And the good old axe shall again cut tracks,
And the frozen slope shall call for the rope
When we go up the mountains in the snow.

Oh my big hob-nailers, oh my big hob-nailers,
How they speak of mountain peak, and lengthy stride down shingle-slide,
Oh my big hob-nailers, oh my big hob-nailers,
Memories raise of joyous days upon the mountainside.

Where the piton rings and the bell-bird sings,
On venison steaks we'll live like kings,
Where the kea cries in the summer skies,
We'll go up the mountains in the snow;
Let the primus roar as it did before,
Let the crampons bite in the pale starlight,
Through the big seracs we'll cut our tracks
When we go up the mountains in the snow.

Oh, my big hob-nailers, etc.

VIVE LA T.T.C.

Tune: *Vive La Compagnie*

Tony Nolan

Now here's to the mountains all covered with snow,
Vive la compagnie,
You'll sell all your gear when its twenty below,
Vive la T.T.C.
Tramping along, singing a song,
Never a care, to the hills we belong,
Can't see a thing and the track's all wrong,
Vive La T.T.C.
Now here's to the fellow who travels the tops,
There's nothing before him but terrible drops.
Tramping along, etc.
Now here's to the fellow who travels the bush,
He's down on his knees so give him a push.
Tramping along, etc.
Now here's to the fellow who lives in the City,
He never gets lost, oh, ain't it a pity.
Tramping along, etc.
Should time or occasion compel us to part,
These days shall forever enliven the heart.
Tramping along, etc.

18

TERROR OF THE TERRANEEK

Tony Nolan

When you're in the mountains, remember little man,
Around the scene prowls a wolverine, she'll get you if she can.
Her eyes are bright as starlight, her kisses make you weak.
You can run all day, but you'll never get away,
From the terror of the Terraneek.

She's the terror of the Terraneekau, as tough as she can be;
She'll make love neath the stars above,
But she makes sure with a three-o-three,
You can cross the deepest river, or climb the highest peak;
You can run all day but you'll never get away
From the terror of the Terraneek.

I met a man who wed her, a honeymoon they spent;
He came back with both eyes black, and his nose all flat and bent.
I fought in the Battle of Britain, and the Battle of Custers Creek,
But I never had a fight like the one that night,
With the terror of the Terraneek.

She's the terror of the Terraneekau, etc.

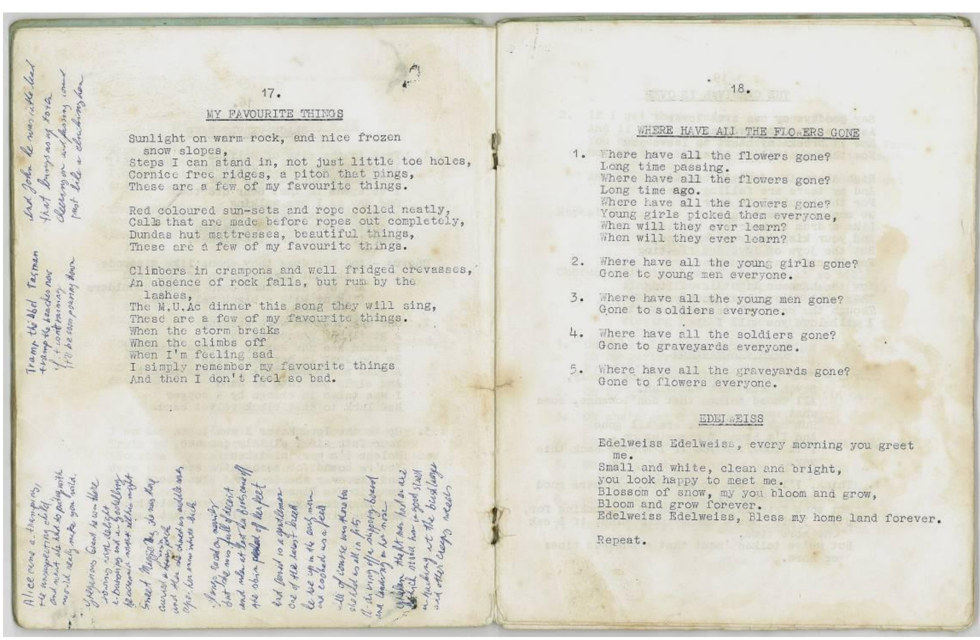
SNOW BUNNY

Tony Nolan

Got a little bunny, she's all mine,
I meet her every morning in the ski-tow line.
Funny little bunny, brighter than the breeze,
Slickest little kitten on a pair of skis,
I'd climb a dozen mountains just to win her smile.
Ski heil, Ski heil, SKI HEIL!
Go bunny, go bunny, go go go!
Swinging and swaying while the sun's aglow,
Sweetest little bunny, you're my queen of the snow.
Bunny, I love you so.

Once in the winter, I'd hibernate.
Now for the dawning light I just can't wait.
Skiing with my bunny is fabulous,
Scooting down the mountainside at fifty plus,
Every other bunny'd like to have her style.
Ski heil, Ski heil, SKI HEIL!
Go bunny, go bunny, go go go
etc.
Bunny, I love you so.
SKI HEIL!

19



17.

MY FAVOURITE THINGS

Sunlight on warm rock, and nice frozen snow slopes,
Steps I can stand in, not just little toe holes,
Cornice free ridges, a piton that pings,
These are a few of my favourite things.

Red coloured sun-sets and rope coiled neatly,
Calls that are made before ropes out completely,
Dundas hut mattresses, beautiful things,
These are a few of my favourite things.

Climbers in crampons and well fridged crevasses,
An absence of rock falls, but rum by the lashes,
The M.U.Ac dinner this song they will sing,
These are a few of my favourite things.
When the storm breaks
When the climbs off
When I'm feeling sad
I simply remember my favourite things
And then I don't feel so bad.

18.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE

1. Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time passing.
Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time ago.
Where have all the flowers gone?
Young girls picked them everyone,
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

2. Where have all the young girls gone?
Gone to young men everyone.

3. Where have all the young men gone?
Gone to soldiers everyone.

4. Where have all the soldiers gone?
Gone to graveyards everyone.

5. Where have all the graveyards gone?
Gone to flowers everyone.

EDELWEISS

Edelweiss Edelweiss, every morning you greet me.
Small and white, clean and bright,
you look happy to meet me.
Blossom of snow, my you bloom and grow,
Bloom and grow forever.
Edelweiss Edelweiss, Bless my home land forever.

Repeat.

Plate 18: **Tramping song book marginalia**

Michael Brown

These compilations can also be interpreted as expressing an emerging sense of "tradition" across the post-WWII tramping singsong culture in New Zealand. They can be considered attempts to "traditionalize"—the process by which a community selects material "to become part of a canon... projected into present or future life from an imagined or real past" (Ben-Amos 1984:116)—each tramping club's core repertoire. In this respect, tramping song books can be compared to manuscript song books created in other informal singing cultures. Deborah Kodish, for example, describes the scrapbooks kept by women in Newfoundland communities as a way for "the means of sociability to be saved, recycled, and reused" (1983:133). In the tramping context, however, reproducible song books were more appropriate for being replaceable, portable, and serviceable. They provided the means for new trampers to be quickly inducted and, importantly, distributed "the means of sociability" evenly across club singsong idiocultures that involved multiple events and shifting combinations of personnel.

Local tramping song books could also serve a preservation motive. Most were created in the 1960s and 1970s, toward the end of the singsong heyday in places like Wellington and when trampers began feeling the need to safeguard repertoire—proudly identified as "tramping songs"—by putting it into print. The history of TTC compilations illustrates this process particularly well. The earliest TTC song books were unofficial publications created in very small runs in the early-1940s. Then, in the 1950s, two unsuccessful attempts were made to produce an official song book. The tasks facing editors in 1951 were noted as being "who should or how would the songs be censored... the method of classifying... and... cost" (*TT* 4/1951); and the third proved decisive during an era of heavy investment in hut-building (*TT* 7/1952). The abandonment of both 1950s efforts also suggests a tacit consensus that song books were not needed in the TTC at this time: singsongs were popular enough for their attendant oral transmission processes to suffice. By the late-1960s, though, for reasons that will be discussed below, the situation was changing:

> ***Maurice Perry:*** It was felt that there were a lot of songs out there and that some of the new people coming in, dare I say, took a bit of educating... and if people could have their book—if they only read and got to know the words before they came away in the weekend—they would at least know them.... they were thought as being a valuable part enough of club life that they should be recorded.

A TTC song-book subcommittee was formed in 1968 to carry out the process and three years later *Tararua Song Book* (Anon. 1971) finally appeared, professionally printed and—appropriately for the TTC—with song permissions duly obtained. The book failed to have a major reviving effect, however. "It was probably... a bit late", subcommittee member Maurice observed. "I think the heyday of the singing was probably past" (interview).[7] But *Tararua Song Book* did preserve many important songs for posterity. In contrast to the battered song books described above, some copies I have examined of this and other tramping compilations have little wear, suggesting they have been treasured as special mementos.

Finally, the New Zealand tramping song books help chart the diffusion of tramping-related songs from specific clubs into the wider milieu. VUCTC and TTC songs, in particular, spread to many New Zealand clubs. By the 1970s, for example, almost every New Zealand tramping compilation was including Wellington classics like 'Double bunking'* and 'The Big Sandfly'* (sometimes adapted). Although more research is required, this situation suggests that many of the topics, themes, and attitudes expressed in these songs—as discussed in Chapter 4—resonated well beyond Wellington with trampers nationwide. Moreover, just as repertoire from other informal singsong cultures spread into the tramping corpus, tramping-related songs spread in the other direction. Harold Gretton and Tony Nolan songs appear in local student anthologies from the 1950s to 1970s, with some tramping pieces even featuring in Australian student, bushwalking, and climbing song books (see Appendix 1).

The decline of the tramping singsong culture

Considered "an inseparable part of the art of tramping" in 1954, the TTC singsong culture was in serious decline fifteen years later. The same falling-off occurred in other Wellington clubs, although the timing probably varied.[8] Furthermore, after 1975, according to one commentator, singing ceased being an integral part of New Zealand tramping more generally (McNeill 2007:45). The following section explores the causes

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[7] Some 1000 copies of *Tararua Song Book* were printed, but demand proved lacklustre (*TT* 8/1972, 8/1975). For a while, it was given to new members and used at campfire sessions (Stephanie Cocks, pers. comm., 11/9/2011).

[8] The timeframe for the VUCTC singsong decline is unclear, but was probably well underway by the mid-1970s.

of this decline in the TTC context. It argues that, while specific developments associated with the historical trends discussed above contributed, these betokened a broader shift away from making-our-our approaches in New Zealand culture that eroded the appeal of singsongs.

In many respects, the declining importance of TTC singsongs during the 1960s was connected with general changes in club focus and tramping practice. In 1961, with the reconstruction of Waerenga Hut, the club's main hut-building era drew to a close. By this stage, the government's New Zealand Forest Service was taking over hut construction from clubs and the TTC felt its existing facilities were sufficient (Maclean 1994:224-225). The work-party culture, which had seen countless truckloads of trampers singing their way to the hills and back, subsequently stepped down several gears. Socialising remained strong, though, boosted by the purchase of clubrooms in 1961, but essentially the TTC was moving into a more settled phase and leaving certain prime singsong contexts behind.

A critical change also occurred around transportation used for travelling to and from the hills. Motorcar ownership sharply increased in New Zealand during the post-WWII prosperity: car registrations rose fourfold between 1945 to 1970, from 198,158 to 892,122 (Statistics New Zealand 2005). TTC trampers were as keen to acquire cars as other New Zealanders and this contributed to truck transport being phased out during the 1960s, such that by 1971, charters were only "occasional" (*TT* 8/1971) with the entire truck system being dropped mid-decade (*TT* 8/1979). Truck journeys had been prime sites for singsongs during the heyday but, as it turned out, cars were not so amenable. Cars only accommodated small groups, lacked a face-to-face seating setup, and their quiet comfort admitted more sedate ways to pass the hours (cf. Martin 2001:87-88). In effect, the liberated atmosphere of group bonding in makeshift surrounds without responsibilities, like having to drive, was lost. Given that initial truck singsongs could generate follow-up sessions on tramps, their absence undoubtedly had a deleterious effect on the entire music-making culture.

Intergenerational connections in the singsong culture also began to falter in the mid-1960s. Reviewing the 1965 Sports Meeting in the *Tararua Tramper*, an ex-serviceman noted the arrival of "a different generation that does things its own way":

> The marathon goes on and gathers strength, but how many people who bother to attend the campfire really enjoy themselves at it? Do they want to battle through the stereotyped programme and chant unsuccessfully the dreary and furtively improper songs alleged to be traditional tramping ditties but set to defunct pop tunes? If they enjoy it, why do they clear out so smartly when the marathon results are known, have some real fun at their own private campfires and sing the sort of songs that everyone knows? (McDonald 1965)

This "different generation" were the first cohorts of "baby boomers", those born between 1945 and 1961, bringing into the Wellington clubs a taste for their own popular music, including coffee-house folk and rock 'n' roll. While new trampers had always contributed to the evolving singsong repertoire, the baby boomers were more musically independent and, it would seem, less inclined to adopt the "traditional tramping ditties" of older trampers. The preference at events like the Sports Meeting for private campfires over the big bonfire (around which clubs and generations were united) was further evidence of an emerging "generation gap". Even the annual Tauherenikau barn dance, an important fixture of the post-War era—indeed, a recognised "tradition"—ceased after Joe Gibbs' death in 1969 (Maclean 1994:218). The hut itself burnt down in 1975 and was never rebuilt.

A decreasing interest in bawdy songs hinted at in the 1965 article was another sign of changing times. The baby boom era had now ended and while trampers did not cease from socialising, courting, and marrying, the advent of the contraceptive pill in the early-1960s was altering sexual behaviour and social mores. Ribaldry had once contributed a provocative charge to mixed singsongs during conservative times, but started to seem "almost dirty" (*TT* 3/1967) once pre-marital sex was becoming normalised. Moreover, the general easing of censorship resulting from the establishment of the Indecent Publications Tribunal in 1963 (Perry 1965), probably rendered the broader spectrum of bawdy song far less daring—and hence as appealing—to trampers than before.[9]

[9] The 1970s feminist movement may have also affected the acceptance of bawdy songs in clubs like the VUCTC, given that universities were strong centres for feminist activism. On the purging of male chauvinist content from Victoria University student extravs from the late-1960s onwards, see Smith 2007:273-274.

Even tramping-specific songs started to lose topicality and resonance. Male-female interaction on tramps was not the endlessly interesting subject it had been in the 1950s, while gear, hut, and track improvements were mitigating some of the hardships celebrated by the songs. Even the *vive-la-compagnie* theme of numbers like 'The brew song'[*] were becoming quaint without regular work parties and truck journeys. By the late-1960s, then, the post-WWII tramping corpus no longer quite matched the social atmosphere of the club scene.

The fading relevance of these tramping classics need not necessarily have proved critical to the TTC singsong culture, except that little *new* material was being created. Tony Nolan had effectively retired from song-writing after *Ski Singalong* (1965) and there were apparently no budding parodists to take over his niche role and portray the changing scene. Nor was new material crossing over from other Wellington clubs; the VUCTC had been largely inactive on this front since Harold Gretton's day. As the bush repertoire aged and dwindled, singsongs lost their distinctive heart and, therefore, their meaningfulness as sites of initiation and shared identity for trampers.

All the changes discussed above, however, not fully explain the slow decline of the TTC singsong culture from the mid-1960s. Why did successive waves of new trampers seem to lose interest in group singing as a social activity?

This phenomenon can be linked to broader changes to New Zealand music culture. Most significantly, the backdrop of participatory singing practices that had given pre- and post-WWII trampers an "at home" familiarity with singsongs, along with a shared repertoire and tune-stock, was being seriously eroded by the 1950s. Domestic singing was largely abandoned as a form of self-entertainment in Pākehā family homes in favour of radio and recorded music, with the advent of television in 1960 sealing the trend. Bottle party singsongs also suffered a setback with the 1967 repeal of "six o'clock closing", after which hotels were permitted to serve alcohol until ten o'clock (although party singing continues in some milieux in the present day: see Chapter 6).

For new TTC members from the early-1970s onwards, then, informal singing was no longer the obvious self-entertainment option it had been for their predecessors. These cohorts were less likely to resort to singing together to pass the time and, when they did,

the act was probably approached more self-consciously. The post-1950s deluge of recorded music may have created an inhibiting effect, too, as performance expectations became more defined by the studio renditions of professional musicians (cf. McLucas 2010:135-136).[10] "Music" was becoming something best left to "musicians". Another competency encouraged by pre-1950s informal music-making, parody, could also be expected to fall into disuse—hence perhaps the lack of contenders to fill Nolan and Gretton's boots.

Many changes, then, conspired in the demise of the TTC tramping singsong culture. Nonetheless, they suggest a single underlying trend: a culture of modern convenience and individual choice—exemplified by private motorcars; radios, stereos, and televisions; the contraceptive pill; commercial tramping gear and government-built huts—that swept through post-WWII New Zealand, rendering practices based on communal making-our-own efforts much less vital than before. Indeed, the influence of tramping clubs on mountain recreation also waned during the 1970s as

> the rigid, often conformist nature of post-war life began to break down... and individualism flourished. This became evident in outdoor recreation as more and more people explored the hills without the guidance and support of the clubs that nurtured earlier generations of trampers... more people became car owners... reliance on club transport declined, and people were able to visit the... mountains with more flexibility and freedom.... (Maclean 1994:229)

Consequently, the social dynamics of the whole bush milieu were also changing. By 1977, only a quarter of those visiting the Tararua Range belonged to an outdoor recreation group (243) and, as huts were overrun by lay trampers, their status as sites of club community diminished—singsongs thus came to be seen as a less-justifiable imposition on other occupants for members of clubs like the TTC. These trends reached a symbolic apotheosis as open fires in huts began to be converted to self-contained wood stoves. The other cooking option was the portable primus and, as Tony Nolan once observed, "Whoever has seen a group of trampers sitting together and singing songs around a primus!" (1971; cf. Martin 2001:88).

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[10] On the inhibiting effect of sound recordings on early-twentieth century amateur music, see Pearsall 1976:138; MacGibbon 2007:99.

Finally, the decline of the club singsong culture was in some respects hastened by its own "ideology". In retrospect, the TTC responses to falling singing interest were relatively passive. Even if a sense of "tradition" was accumulating around the singsongs by the 1960s, perhaps this was not as strong as might be supposed. As the 1965 Sports Meeting review quoted above suggests, some veteran trampers felt uneasy with the idea of imposing "alleged... traditional tramping ditties" upon initiates. The same logic could apply to singing itself. Veteran trampers had valued the individual freedom to voluntarily contribute to singsongs. To force a singsong "tradition" onto reluctant neophytes ran counter to the spirit of tramping itself. Ultimately, singing was only an optional adjunct to the main intergenerational interest: tramping.

Aftermath

While much diminished by the mid-1970s as a self-renewing musical culture, TTC singsong activity continued. Campfire evenings, ski weeks, and city gatherings still featured bouts of informal singing through the 1980s and beyond, mainly among older members. The writer himself participated in several latterday events while growing up. Singing also continued at annual occasions like the midwinter Waerenga Hut birthday party, where it was only recently dropped because of an "undercurrent of dirge" swamping the group due to a preponderance of elderly voices (Judith Claridge, interview). The annual clubroom Christmas evening remains a final bastion of TTC singing. After speeches and slide show, members customarily sing accompanied by a local Salvation Army band. Items once included both carols and club tramping songs, but the latter have now been dropped. Given the enduring appeal of carols, this annual singing will doubtless continue for the foreseeable future.

Older trampers I interviewed generally considered the decline in club singing had been inevitable, for the reasons already described. But many had mixed feelings about the demise of an activity so prominent in happy memories of their prime tramping years. Several wondered how such a simple and enjoyable activity had become seemingly inconceivable:

Janet King: A lot of the people that are tramping now never experienced singing, so they don't know what they're missing. They create their friendships and enjoyments in other ways....

> I guess they just talk.... I feel really sad about that for them... because to me that singing was so much an enjoyable part of the trips. [A]

In many ways, though, the trend away from informal group singing among Pākehā New Zealanders has only deepened. The shared music culture of mid-twentieth century New Zealand has been replaced by a music culture where myriad popular subgenres cater to small listening communities. Personal listening devices like iPods are also now a relatively common sight on mountains tracks. Such factors would seem to militate against group singing as a form of self-entertainment for twenty-first century trampers:

Trevor Mowbray: There is no social acceptance of the idea, "okay, let's sing a song". There is one guy who has sung on the track [in our club]... and people like to hear him sing and encourage him... but it's regarded as an oddity, a personal thing... not a social group thing.

Yet some regarded any sounding of the death knell on the tramping singsong culture with dismay. After giving a presentation about my research to one local club in June 2008, for example, I offhandedly described tramping songs as being mainly of "historical" interest, a comment that left one audience member aghast. "But this is *us*", she protested. "We're not 'historical'!" Trevor Mowbray also suggested it was premature to be "rushing things off into a museum" just yet.

As a second-generation TTC tramper who has inherited his parent's enthusiasm for tramping songs, such issues also raised serious questions for me: what was the value for the tramping community of my "insider" ethnography? Could the many songs I had collected form the basis of a singsong revival? Having discovered how closely tied tramping singsongs were to the post-WWII context, though, such an intervention presented a dilemma. Would it not be better to accept the fact singsongs had run their course? Furthermore, would a calculated revival not run counter to the vernacular spirit of the post-War culture?

My equivocation was overtaken by events, however, when I was roped into helping with the 2008 TTC Christmas pantomime. These also have been a regular feature of the club celebrations since the early-1960s (Mason 1994:73), and in 2008, after a hiatus of several years, member John Grace wrote a new twenty-minute sketch: 'Famous Five Go to the Tararuas'. The roster of characters included three singing and ukulele-strumming

trampers dubbed “the Tony Nolans”, one played by myself, dressed identically to match a photograph of Nolan from a recent *FMC Bulletin* cover (6/2006; see Plate 7). Such irreverent touches—including a parody of Henry Purcell’s ‘Dido’s Lament’ strewn with toilet jokes—and singing of updated tramping items by the audience were heartening signs: the post-WWII singsong material still finds ongoing use; the club bards are not forgotten; and vernacular skills remain within easy reach. Another pantomime was performed in 2009.

Some final questions about the post-WWII tramping singsong culture, posed at the start of this ethnography, concern its negligible treatment in New Zealand music studies. In particular, why has there been only tepid interest from folksong collectors? During the 1955 to 1975 period, for instance, collectors were primarily seeking material that was orally-transmitted and of New Zealand origin (see Introduction), and tramping-related songs fitted both criteria. They were probably viewed as lacking depth in “tradition”, however, most examples being less than twenty years old. Nonetheless, over subsequent decades tramping songs have continued to rouse relatively little interest. One explanation may be that these songs have not satisfied the romantic nationalist motive that has heavily informed New Zealand folk music research (Brown 2007:134-135, 146-147). Tramping songs do not espouse a heroic colonial past, a rural heritage, or working class solidarity. “It’s all a bit trivial”, one collector remarked to me after hearing the *Songs of Billy and Pack* documentary, merely the self-entertainment of weekend urban recreationalists (Rona Bailey, pers. comm. 11/2004). The neglect of outdoor recreational singing by music scholars elsewhere may arise from similar attitudes (e.g., see Green 1972:23). The singsong format itself may be so accessible and widespread (i.e. a small version takes place around millions of birthday cakes every day) that it too has seemed “trivial” compared with authentic “folk” performance styles.

Nonetheless, the post-WWII tramping singsong cultures of the Wellington clubs and those elsewhere hold much interest in the context of New Zealand music studies. This Pākehā music-making provides a rich chronicle of the changing attitudes, social mores, and lifestyles of the post-WWII decades. The homemade songs represent a unique musical response to the New Zealand landscape, based on direct physical engagement with the wilderness. Furthermore, the tramping singsongs are just one example of the widespread but little-studied informal singing culture of mid-twentieth century New

Zealand; the bawdy song element and song books also point to wider phenomena. Lastly, the tramping singsong culture presents a compelling image of the vernacular in New Zealand music.

Conclusion

The tramping singsong culture as exemplified in the Tararua Tramping Club and Victoria University College Tramping Club presents a classic image of the vernacular: informal music-making at face-to-face events in small communities. Singsongs were intuitively approached by these trampers as fun self-entertainment, an activity in which anybody could take part because it was free from "musical" expectations. Although some individuals made special contributions, no musical experts were required at the tramping singsong, which was, quintessentially, "music without musicians". Nonetheless, the vernacular imparted constructive dimensions to this music. A body of tramping-related songs, proudly identified as "tramping songs", was created and shared in the club communities. Homemade song books were manufactured. Certain performance qualities, like group vocal textures in which individual voices could "roar, gurgle and squeak", were recognised as expressing a tramping ideal. Overall, these singsong idiocultures had the same making-our-own spirit of tramping's liminoid adventure in primitive self-reliance.

The 1940s-1960s singsong heyday paralleled a boom period in Wellington club tramping. Due to various historical events and trends—the end of WWII, the return of ex-servicemen, Cold War politics, the baby boom, the 1950s moral climate, the forty-hour working week, and the "pavlova paradise" prosperity—these energetic adventures in the hills attracted men and women alike. Informal singing also embodied the egalitarian liberties and adventure that trampers craved. At each event, the vernacular enabled participants to navigate, explore, and develop their own musical territory together. Any resulting rough edges merely sealed the authenticity of this quest for wholeness and a back-to-basics reality.

By the early-1960s, the "pavlova paradise" was inspiring a new confidence in New Zealand popular culture, enough for some minor public recognition of the tramping singsong culture in the form of an LP recording instigated by the main TTC songwriter,

Tony Nolan. But the post-WWII prosperity was also transforming the general nature of tramping and, slowly but surely, the practical, social, intergenerational, and musical basis of the singsong culture was undermined. Ultimately, too, factors that had released the vernacular—especially the music-making's adjunct role and the egalitarian social ideal of tramping—overrode the emerging sense that singsongs were a tramping "tradition" in their own right. Although some residual interest remains, tramping singsongs died as a self-renewing music culture in the TTC and VUCTC—and throughout New Zealand according to some commentators—by the mid-1970s. Nonetheless, from the 1940s until the 1960s, these small communities of outdoor recreationists found deep satisfaction in making their own distinctive music.

PART THREE

Jingajik, rakuraku, Māori strum: the Māori guitar strumming style

Chapter 6
Introducing the Māori guitar strumming style

It's all about how you infect other people with the music, especially with the guitar... getting... the whole community in your garage or in somebody's lounge... having a good time.... The songs do evolve every time you play them to suit the party atmosphere... no one's there to criticise you as a musician or anything... if you change the strum to a song that everybody knows and give it a different style... they'll go with it... reggae up some Beatles and people go, "Oh choice! This is all good".... See the Māori strum... jingajik a jingajik*. That's what they call it, "Do you know the* jingajik*, bro?"*
(Jamie McCaskill, interview)

I have no idea where it comes from: dumdejak*. Just everyone I know, we say, "We're going to do some* dumdejaks*", and they know what I'm talking about.... Going to the marae and being out the back with some beers... four or five flagons amongst a group of ten people, sitting down and someone's got a guitar.... It's a common thing... you go off to a tangi, you very often bump into people you don't know. The guitar comes out—bang!--everyone's together... "Hoki mai e tama ma", straight away, everyone knows it.*
(Charles Royal, interview A)

Junga jucka junga jucka, *yeah, it's just something… going back forty years, might even be fifty years.... Every Māori in the army, I would say every one, could play the guitar.... go to parties in town... with a couple of my mates, soon as we went in with a guitar... the party'd change, took a whole new genre, you know.... The only time they'll chuck me the guitar is if their fingers are raw.... I'm not a guitar player at all. But at parties everyone's fonged, so it doesn't matter really... long as that beat's there.*
(Claude Hooper, interview)

Many New Zealanders will recognise the sound of an acoustic-guitar accompaniment often called "the Māori strum"—the throbbing rhythm described by interviewees above—heard at party singalongs and in kapa haka (Māori cultural performance). The strum may also conjure associations with the 1960s popular song 'Ten guitars'; for expatriates, it may evoke memories of their New Zealand homeland. While researching this topic, two basic aspects soon became evident. First, the strum was the most popular

manifestation of an entire accompaniment style; second, it has been given dozens of colloquial names over the years, including onomatopoeic terms like *jingajik*, *dumdejak*, and *jungajuka*, along with English-language expressions like “the party strum”, “the Kiwi strum”, and “the fish ‘n’ chip strum”. Furthermore, many te reo Māori (Māori language) names have been bestowed upon the guitar itself, including kitā, kūono, and perhaps most popular, rakuraku, a word known throughout Polynesia meaning “to scratch with the fingernails or claws” (Biggs and Clark 2010; Williams 1971). “Rakuraku” identifies the guitar with the strumming style.

This feast of names is crucial to understanding what will here be called, to bring the topic into greater focus, “the Māori guitar strumming style” or some variant thereof (see below for more discussion of this chosen term). To begin with, the names provide multiple recognition of the style’s existence, and signify its wide diffusion among Māori people and the New Zealand population. They also testify to a stylistic history stretching back to at least 1940: the Māori strumming style is probably the most enduring and popular guitar style to have yet emerged in New Zealand. In recent years, too, music critics and writers have begun to identify examples of this style—mostly calling them “the Māori strum”—in recordings by various popular groups from New Zealand, including Split Enz (Sweetman 2009), Hello Sailor (Bollinger 2009:79), Crowded House (Bourke 1997:76; Sweetman 2011), and OMC (Bollinger 1996; Ferguson 2002:45). As Sally Bodkin-Allen suggests, “the so-called ‘Māori strum’... has become a distinctive sound associated with New Zealand” (2011:70).

The Māori guitar strumming style’s apparent significance, however, is barely reflected in the few brief discussions found in New Zealand music studies (e.g., Cattermole 2004:20-21; Bodkin-Allen 2011:70; cf. Brown 2011); even the coverage in more populist works is fairly limited (e.g., Anon. 2005; Cawthorn 1996). The larger topic of guitars in Māori music—where they have been a fixture for over sixty years—has also been neglected. On the government *Te Ara* website, Charles Royal concludes “Kua noho mai te kutā hei taonga waiata nui a te Māori”—“Māori have made the guitar central to their music” (2008)—and yet few scholarly works discuss this apparently “central” aspect of Māori music. Given that non-Western use of the guitar has been studied for many years (Coelho 2003:4-5), the reasons for this oversight across all branches of New Zealand music studies may be local in origin. To appreciate them

better, it is necessary to describe something of the history of the indigenous Māori people.

The Māori people are descended from Polynesians who settled the archipelago of Aotearoa (New Zealand) about 800 years ago, establishing a subsistence mode of life and living as iwi (tribes) in different areas. By the fourteenth century, a distinctive new culture had developed (Davidson 1987 [1984]). Apart from a 1642 encounter with Abel Tasman, it was not until James Cook's 1769 visit that regular contact with Europeans was established. This culminated in the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between Māori iwi and the United Kingdom, after which New Zealand became part of the British Empire. While many Māori were initially optimistic about these developments, questionable processes of land acquisition and mass scale of subsequent colonisation—British settlers outnumbering Māori by 1858 (King 2003:169)—soon provoked alarm, protest, and armed confrontation. Pan-tribal movements emerged with the aim of coordinating resistance and "Māori", originally a word meaning "normal", came to denote the shared identity of the indigenous people.

Māori lost much land during colonisation in the nineteenth-century, but also devised strategies for cultural survival and legal redress. New challenges arose from a mass migration after World War II that saw Māori shift from being a predominantly rural to predominantly urban people by the 1980s (Belich 2001:471). The shift to cities was driven by better life opportunities, but many migrants experienced poverty and discrimination. Maintaining iwi connections and traditional knowledge were challenges, too, with the number of fluent Māori speakers falling dramatically in these years (480). Māori cultural clubs were one key strategy for ensuring cultural survival and, in the 1970s and 1980s, a variety of other initiatives were established: a movement often referred to as "the Māori Renaissance" (McKinnon 1997:99). In 1975, ongoing protests about the alienation of Māori land led to the formal establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal and the government began to negotiate settlements with iwi over historical breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi.

British colonisation has bestowed a complex legacy on contemporary New Zealand. Māori people continue to suffer inordinate rates of health problems, poor housing, unemployment, and imprisonment. But there has also been much mingling between the

races, including inter-marriage, with the presence of other ethnic groups also contributing to an increasingly-complex population mix. Nonetheless, a distinction between "Māori" and "European-New Zealander/Pākehā" dominates understanding of New Zealand society, and underlies a bicultural ideology that has become well-established since the 1980s (Fleras and Spoonley 1999).[1] People who self-identify as Māori currently comprise some fifteen percent of the New Zealand population.

New Zealand history thus presents several possible explanations for the lack of attention to the Māori guitar strumming style. Being a modern feature of Māori music, scholarly priority has perhaps been given to consolidating a traditional heritage. Yet certain modern forms, such as waiata-ā-ringa (action song) and Māori rap, have been extensively studied, indicating that maybe the guitar style's homely qualities have denied it appreciation. The many names for the *jingajik* strum also hint at ambivalence around its meaning in the broader New Zealand context.

This ethnography seeks to shed some light upon the Māori guitar strumming style using the concept of vernacular. Before proceeding, though, some clarification is required concerning the term "the Māori guitar strumming style". While "the Māori strum" is probably the most widely used emic term for this style and therefore a good contender for an umbrella label, its connotations are problematic, not least because it suggests that only a single strumming pattern is involved. To acknowledge the greater possibilities arising from this way of playing the guitar, I therefore use "strumming style". The modifier "Māori" is retained, because even though this style involves common techniques and has similarities with certain popular mid-twentieth century guitar accompaniments (which likely provided original models), it has become strongly associated with Māori music-making since the 1950s and is recognised as such in New Zealand. Yet I have not attempted to determine a unique "Māori" essence of the style in terms of an agreed and quantifiable musical product. Indeed, while being perceived by many New Zealanders (Māori and non-Māori) as having a generic flavour, its strongly vernacular basis and lack of formalisation has kept it open for individuals and communities to "make their own" in terms of strumming patterns, fingering, chords, performance nuances, identifying names, and other features.

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[1] One corollary being that, while many New Zealanders are of mixed Māori/European descent, hybrid cultural identities related to this have not become well-established (Metge 1976:39; Bell 2004).

This ethnography takes a multi-pronged approach, seeking to locate the Māori guitar strumming style from various angles, including a discussion of some characteristic features of the style, how it is perceived, its usage in key performance contexts, its presence on recordings, and citation in written discourse. As with the tramping club singsong study, the core ethnographic research was undertaken in the Wellington region, but certain elements of the wider New Zealand context have also been considered. The case study is spread over Chapters 6 to 8. The present chapter outlines the research approach, describes the pre-1960s history of the guitar in New Zealand, then looks at various aspects of the strumming style, including the *jingajik* strum, learning processes, strumming patterns and chords, and the style's origins and spread. The chapter concludes by discussing the style's use in the party singalong context. Chapter 7 investigates the use of guitar accompaniment in kapa haka. Chapter 8 looks at the strumming style in the wider New Zealand context, including its presence on music recordings and playing by Pākehā people.

Overview of research

When did I first hear the Māori guitar strumming style? Growing up Pākehā during the 1970s in Waikanae, a town with only a small Māori presence, I can remember no specific encounters. Teaching myself guitar as a teenager, my interests lay in other areas (e.g., the blues), yet I would have heard guitar strumming in Māori cultural performances at school or seen it on television. Then, at some point in the late-1990s, I became aware of the term "the Māori strum"; and then guitar playing on a Māori concert party LP in my mother's record collection prompted me to make connections and take an increasing interest in the style.

Looking back, my gradually dawning consciousness supported the intuition that the strumming style was a suitable topic for a study of the vernacular in New Zealand music. Here was a musical phenomenon that was just "there", taken for granted, hardly written or talked about (at least in my experience). The style was also strongly linked with the obvious vernacular domain of Māori party singalongs. While kapa haka represented a highly disciplined (i.e. apparently non-vernacular) arena for the style's use, I realised this presented an opportunity to determine whether any aspects of the

vernacular mode might be retained in such a context. The focus on a Māori instrumental style also complemented the singing-based Pākehā topic of tramping club singsongs. The Māori strumming style has thus enabled a more rounded overall study of the vernacular in New Zealand music to be made.

Given the strumming style is widely performed in New Zealand, the study has been approached as orthodox ethnography. My fieldwork has centred on learning kapa haka guitar accompaniment. In February 2009, after approaching several groups, I was invited to attend a practice session of the Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club (NPYMC; Ngāti Pōneke) at Pipitea Marae—marae being traditional sites of Māori community, including a meeting house and other facilities—in downtown Wellington. Their senior guitarist Michael Priest agreed to teach me about the role and I joined the group, eventually competing with NPYMC in regional competitions (see more Chapter 7). The ethnography also draws on interviews with Māori people I knew or was introduced to during the research, their iwi affiliations being given where they are first quoted in the main text. Furthermore, I interviewed three Pākehā who played the style and Tony Vercoe, former head of Kiwi Records. Interviewees ranged in age from their late-twenties to their seventies. A total of sixteen interviews were conducted with fourteen people (including one email interview), with some strumming demonstrations and NPYMC performances included on the supplementary CD and DVD. The research also included an email enquiry made through the “NZ-Folk” email list-server (see Kiwifolk 2009).

While centred on the Wellington region, the case study has also looked a little beyond the core ethnography to the strumming style’s history and usage nationally. Archival materials—including photographs, field recordings, and films held in various public institutions—helped cast some light on the history; two archival films are included on the DVD. Māori cultural group LP and EP recordings from the 1950s-1980s period also testify to the style’s longstanding use and were examined. Various sources provided national impressions of contemporary guitar accompaniment in kapa haka. These included video recordings made of all performances broadcast on the Māori Television channel during the 2009 Te Matatini national competition at Tauranga, along with selected recordings of earlier festivals (from Michael Priest’s personal collection); a few interviewees also told me about experiences with kapa haka groups beyond the

Wellington region. Comprehensive newspaper and magazine search tools (e.g., Newztext 1994-2012) helped gauge the style's reception in public discourse around New Zealand. Appendices on the CD-ROM present data on music instrument imports to New Zealand (5), checklists of archival films (6) and vinyl recordings of Māori cultural material (7), along with an additional study of a Māori street entertainer (8).

Overall, sufficient material has been gathered for the purposes of this case study, although various subtopics await future investigation. I attended only a handful of party singalongs, for instance, and have mostly relied upon interviews for this subtopic. Unfortunately, few party opportunities presented themselves, perhaps reflecting a declining popularity for such music-making or maybe my lack of the necessary social contacts. Nor have I undertaken a literature review of te reo Māori publications. Ethnographies of kapa haka groups from other parts of New Zealand will also be needed for a more complete picture of guitar accompaniment in this context to be revealed.

My being Pākehā inevitably informs this ethnographic case study in many ways. I began the research with few experiences in Māoridom and little knowledge of te reo Māori, thus approached the topic largely as an "outsider". There was also some initial apprehension on my part, given the legitimacy of Pākehā research on Māori topics has been challenged in the past (King 1988:174-192; cf. Tuhiwai Smith 1999). However, my inquiries were welcomed by the Māori people I contacted, and I received much hospitality and support. Undoubtedly, the nature of the topic helped. As one person explained, guitar playing was not really tikanga (traditional custom) or protected tribal knowledge, like traditional mōteatea (poetry) or waiata (song). It could be discussed freely and in English. Being able to play guitar myself also created a shared point of reference. Nonetheless, I occasionally sensed—for instance, when discussing the slightly contentious term "the Māori strum"—the potential for misunderstanding which can infiltrate Māori-Pākehā interaction. But even these perceptions, I realised, gave an insight into the topic at hand.

A notable aspect of the study was recurring comment about the Māori guitar strumming style being a novel topic: interviewees often said they had "never really thought about it much before". This situation suggested—and further research seemed to confirm—that there was little or no established history of or written discourse about the style. "What

you're doing at the moment is you're almost creating the connections for us", one person told me, "so that we can see when [the guitar] was first introduced to Māori and... at that point it will become a whakapapa [genealogical history] for us" (anonymous ["Heni"], interview). Such statements helped me realise that my research was poised at an unrepeatable moment in time. As I see it, my role has not been to determine the style's whakapapa, nor promote its latent artistic or cultural value—although all these possibilities emerged during the research. Instead, this study seeks to evoke the Māori guitar strumming style on the cusp of it having been "never really thought about much before".

The guitar in New Zealand

Guitars have been played in New Zealand since at least the 1840s (Thomson 1991:21). The instrument was used for parlour entertainment by early settlers and at formal concerts, bush camps, and on the goldfields. But the guitar was only moderately popular during the colonial era, with pianos remained preeminent in domestic music and other instruments being equally or more prevalent. The guitar rose in prominence in the 1890s, however, through the influence of the American banjo, mandolin, and guitar (BMG) movement (Noonan 2008), with ensembles being established in various New Zealand cities (see Plate 19). Yet even here guitars essentially served a supporting role.

After World War I, the guitar's status rose dramatically and within only forty years would come to dominate the local instrument market. Of course, the same explosion in popularity has occurred in many other countries. The guitar is now, according to Victor Coehlo, "possibly the most played instrument in the world" (2003:3), having

> accommodated more diverse players, techniques, and styles than any other instrument.... [The] popularity of the guitar since 1900... is largely indebted to the widespread dissemination of popular music – with which the guitar is virtually synonymous – and the global seeding of guitar cultures through human migration, colonialism, post-colonialism, technology, and revival. (5-6)

The tandem spread of guitars and popular music is crucial to explaining the instrument's impact in New Zealand. The 1920s heralded the arrival of several American genres (Hawai'ian- and mainland-based) which furnished the instrument with new "guitar

cultures": specific configurations of instrumental roles, techniques, and sounds (Bennett and Dawe 2001). Retail promotion, recordings, touring acts, and local musicians all helped embed these "guitar cultures" in New Zealand music culture over the next few decades.

Plate 19: **Wellington mandolin and guitar club**
NZ Freelance, 20/12/1902

Three genres of the 1920s and 1930 especially boosted the guitar's popularity. The first was Hawai'ian music in the *hapa haole* hybrid of traditional and Western elements (Kanahele 1979:106-107). The genre's most iconic instruments were the ukulele and the Hawai'ian guitar (or steel guitar), played flat on the lap, but ensembles usually also featured backing guitars played in the standard position. Hawai'ian music achieved significant popularity in New Zealand by the mid-1920s and remained important until the 1960s (Bourke 2010:214-226). Various incarnations of what would be later called country music also attracted local followings from the late-1920s (226-228). Guitars were integral here, too, whether as a self-accompaniment for "singing cowboys" like Jimmie Rodgers or in the rhythm sections of Western swing groups. Another "guitar culture" was associated with swing jazz, which flourished in New Zealand dance clubs and cabarets from the mid-1930s (47-93). Many swing bands—following the lead of bands like the Count Basie Orchestra—featured a rhythm guitar to provide a strummed-

chord pulse. All these guitar styles were widely played in New Zealand and likely contributed to the emergence of the Māori strumming style (see below).

Before the 1930s, most guitars played in New Zealand were variations on the six-string Spanish (classical) instrument developed in the early-1800s (Turnbull et al. 2001). They were small, fitted with gut strings, and capable of only moderate volume. Spanish-style guitars were used in both BMG and *hapa haole*-style ensembles, but other—notably louder—models began appearing after WWI. Steel-string "dreadnoughts" were widely adopted in country music, while the "arch-top" (or "f-hole") guitar became associated with jazz. Local swing bands probably began utilising amplified semi-acoustic guitars by the late-1930s.

With the mid-1950s advent of rock 'n' roll, the guitar was recast yet again in solid-bodied electric form. It was also during the post-WWII period that guitars began to dominate the New Zealand retail market. Between 1956 and 1963, guitar sales apparently rose 300 percent.[2] Almost all acoustic guitars were imported and, in 1963, a total of 47,519 "plucked stringed instruments"—probably mostly guitars—were shipped to New Zealand from countries like West Germany and Japan (Department of Statistics 1962-1963:254). Some models were available for the relatively-inexpensive price of £4/10 (see Plate 20). Competition from Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean manufacturers increased over the next two decades and, between 1963 and 1980, over 850,000 plucked stringed instruments were imported into New Zealand (see Appendix 5). Most would have been guitars.

The popularisation of guitars in New Zealand in the mid-twentieth century provides one framework for understanding the emergence of the Māori guitar strumming style. This topic will be covered later in this chapter, but one basic question can be asked here: when were guitars first widely played by Māori people? Although there are some earlier reports of guitar playing,[3] the important decade seems to be the 1920s. Even as late as 1924, Eldson Best, the prolific ethnographer of Māori culture, could observe that "the Maori has not shown any desire to adopt even the simpler forms of our stringed instruments" (1934 [1924]:153).

[2] Figure quoted in the 1963 newsreel *Pictorial Parade 140*, National Film Unit, 1963.
[3] For example, see *North Otago Times*, 16/5/1893, p.3; *Poverty Bay Herald*, 4/2/1916, p.5.

Plate 20: **Advertisement for musical instruments, 1963**

Te Ao Hou, 9/1963

This situation was rapidly changing during the 1920s, though, as Māori concert parties began to include acoustic guitars alongside other stringed instruments like ukuleles, banjos, and mandolins; they also began to be used in informal music-making. By 1959, commentators could state unequivocally: "The guitar is as much a feature of the modern Maori musical scene as the koauau [Māori flute] was of the old" (Armstrong 1959). One person I interviewed recalled the provincial city of Rotorua as virtually awash with guitars in these years:

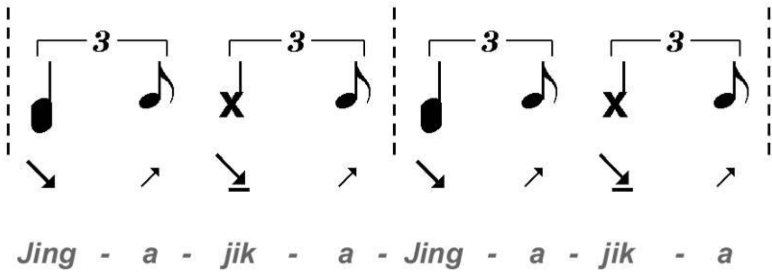
Claude Hooper (Te Arawa, with affiliations to Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Maru): You'd just hear it everywhere... you'd walk down the street and within every hundred metres. They weren't busking, they were playing, they just took their guitar to town… parks, cars, trains, everywhere... there was a Māori boy sitting there with a guitar.

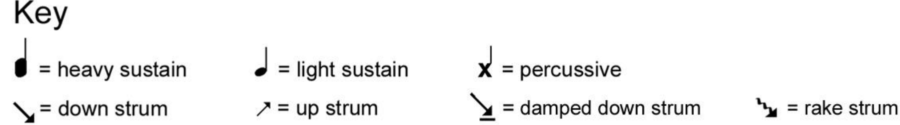
Jingajik

September 2008: I am talking with Himiona Grace (Ngāti Toarangatira, Ngāti Porou, Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Raukawa) in downtown Wellington. He tells me about his early experiences playing guitar and, after testing the action of an acoustic I have brought along, begins to demonstrate some different strums. After performing a simple repeating

pattern, he uses a word previously unknown to me. "That's the *jingajik*", Himiona states, "the basis of so many songs... the most common strum for Māori songs" (interview).

"The *jingajik*" is easily the best-known strumming pattern associated with the Māori guitar strumming style, being given many onomatopoeic and other names: this is what is usually meant when people speak of "the Māori strum". The *jingajik* illustrates many core techniques of the overall style. Figure 3 presents an idealised depiction using a notation system devised for this case study to assist comparison, together with a key for all such notations.





Note: Notehead heights roughly indicate pitch, especially whether bass or treble guitar strings are most being strummed, ie. lower notes correspond more to the bass strings being sounded. Relative size of strum arrows gives an indication of the strength of the strum, larger arrows corresponding to stronger strums and vice versa.

Figure 3: **The *jingajik* (a.k.a. "the Māori strum")**

For previous transcriptions, see Cattermole 2004:20-21, 2011:52; Dickison 2008:26. Note: this ethnography will use triplets to transcribe eighth-note "swing" feel, although the actual "beat-upbeat ratio" (Benadon 2006) of the original performances may vary.

The *jingajik* is essentially a duple-time rhythm created using a down-up across the strings strumming action. The down strums use an alternating technique: on-beats receive a thrumming full sustain (*jing*); off-beats, a percussive thwack (*jik*). The percussive *jik*, created by striking and damping the strings, cutting their resonance, even stopping the sound entirely, is an identifying feature of the Māori strumming style. The sustained (on-beat) and percussive (off-beat) strums also generate an underlying "tock

tick" modulation, whatever the chord being played. Lighter strums, meanwhile, as the hand brushes upwards on the eighth-note off-beats, impart a sense of rhythmic swing to produce something similar to a shuffle rhythm. The *jingajik* is not just a rhythm, though, but a "sound beat" (Ray Isaacs, interview): a musical unit fusing rhythm, texture, and tonal modulation in a repeated two-beat measure.

The *jingajik* also demonstrates how the various "sound beat" components turn the guitar into a kind of simplified ensemble. People often observed in interviews how the *jingajik*'s down strums deliver a rich bass thrum; the up strums, treble fills; and the percussive strum, a snare-drum strike. "Bass, rhythm, and drums", Himiona Grace concluded: "You've got it all" (interview). The old saying that the guitar is like an orchestra—there being many guitar styles through history that have also provided standalone accompaniments—is thus given a twist: the Māori strumming style turns a single guitar into a band. As we shall see, this standalone quality provides many advantages in two common performance contexts for the Māori strumming style: parties and kapa haka. The *jingajik* also embodies several other general characteristics of the style: it is not intrinsically linked with any special tuning or type of guitar and the guitar is addressed with a certain gestural simplicity.

The onomatopoeic names given to the *jingajik*—this being merely the first and most common of those I have collected—are also distinctive. Many people had their own version (some dating back to the 1960s) and few seemed aware of the multitude of other variants. Examples I have collected, with an asterisk indicating an attempted spelling on my part, include:

jim-mejak	*chin chuk**	*jingalik**
*jungajuka**	*jungajuk**	*jungjuk**
*jingajinka**	*a-ringa-a-chick*	*per-janga-jack*
*dumdejak**	*chink-a-chink**	

Examples traced from published sources include:

jingjika	(Duff 1990:63)
*jung-jucka-juk**	(from Sheridan and Brown 1993)
jinga jick	(McCabe 1995:D2)

boom-chucka-boom-chucka	(Leonard 1999:10)
boom chikka, boom chikka	(Gamble 1999)
ringa chica	(Anon. 2005:22)
ka-ching ka-chik	(Gifford 2007b)
jinga jack	(Story 2008)
kachunka kachunka	(Gifford 2010:110).

These vernacular expressions will be discussed further below, but here it can be noted that each is a kind of miniature oral notation. As such, their minor differences should not be overlooked. The contrast between *jungajuka* and *chin chuk*, for instance, suggests subtle variations in how this iconic strum is played and heard. Despite the *jingajik*'s seeming simplicity, then, there is no single authoritative version.

Demonstrating the *jingajik* to a Pākehā acquaintance one day revealed another interesting phenomenon. "That's not a Māori strum", he insisted. "That's just the normal strum". This and similar comments suggest that the pattern may have become so widespread in New Zealand as to be now regarded by some as simply a basic generic accompaniment. Yet it is also apparent that, while the Māori strumming style has an evident continuity in New Zealand going back many decades, strums similar to the *jingajik* have long been played elsewhere in the world (e.g., see "slow rock" and "fast rock" accompaniments in Lomax 1960:604; and "rockin' strum" in Edwards and Kelley 1966:234). Without discounting the possibility of some international diffusion (see Dickison 2008:26; and footnote 6 below), many of these other versions have doubtless arisen independently. The percussive damping technique described above has long been very widely used and, indeed, one of my Māori informants, scholar and composer Charles Royal (Ngāti Raukawa, Marutūaha, Ngāpuhi), refers to it as a "standard guitar technique". But even if the formal uniqueness of the *jingajik* and other strums used with this style remain to be determined (this could be the subject of future research), a strong local identification in New Zealand is nonetheless undeniable—as the many vernacular names confirm.[4] Interestingly, even my sceptical Pākehā friend perceived a certain generic quality to the overall Māori strumming style. I merely had to play a second strum for him to declare: "Now that's a real Māori strum!"

[4] Perceptions in New Zealand of the Māori strumming style's distinctiveness have led some local writers to notice the flavour of "the Māori strum" in overseas recordings (e.g., see Small 2003).

Learning the strumming style

To begin to understand how the Māori guitar strumming style is intertwined with a vernacular approach in music-making, we must first turn to the processes by which it has been learned. This section presents testimony from Māori interviewees living in the Wellington region which suggests that—as is the case with many guitar styles around the world—informal learning is normative, and that this allows people to "grow into" their own version of the style (see Chapter 8 for similar Pākehā testimony).

Many people I interviewed or talked with grew up in families where homemade music was common. Acoustic guitars, ukuleles, and other instruments were mentioned as familiar household objects, being played by fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, uncles and aunties, cousins and friends:

Ray Isaacs (Tūhoe, Ngāti Manawa) *grew up in rural Bay of Plenty in the 1950s-1960s*: The guitar was just a household instrument… I can remember my music as a child... the guitar and singing... the parties at our house... looking through the crack in the door watching them sing, 'cause Mum and Dad were very musical: piano accordion, tin whistle, ukulele. Uncles playing the tin flutes, the spoons.

Michael Priest (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) *grew up in Wellington in the 1950s-1960s:* We enjoyed singing... at school and the family's quite musical... really involved with Sunday School singing.... I've always been interested in guitars. My aunties and uncles, my Mum and Dad, they played guitar at parties they used to have.... That's where we got involved…. I joined a kapa haka group when I was about ten. [A]

Himiona Grace *grew up at Hongoeka Bay near Wellington during the 1960s and 1970s:* Family of musos, both sides. They used to have the barn dances and stuff.... The uncles in fact used to play anything… guitar… steel guitar, banjos, ukuleles, saxophone, and clarinet…. We probably had two guitars.

Guitars, then, were approachable instruments to be picked up and played by anybody. Learning guitar happened in various ways:

Jamie McCaskill (Ngāti Tamaterā) *grew up in the Coromandel during the 1980s:* My Dad... taught me how to play when I was about five or six... used to strum, play along... watch

Dad play at parties... about ten or eleven I used to pick up the guitar at parties and try and get the same kind of energy....

Himiona Grace: My brothers and cousins played guitar… and it was quite fierce competition… no one would ever show you anything… turn their backs and say, “Listen to this”, and play something. So it just made me really determined… I just taught myself. We all did.

“David” *(anonymous) grew up in the Waikato during the 1970s and 1980s:* I didn’t start playing till I was about fourteen, fifteen. For most Māoris about my age, they had already started... I was self-taught, just watching. No one actually sat down to teach me chords... just listening to music, having a bit of a tutū on the guitar, as Māoris say, just having a bit of a jam...

The emphasis on informal self-teaching and imitation was common among people I interviewed (cf. Anon. 2005). If family members may have given some casual instruction, then nobody recalled formal lessons or books being utilised. (Only recently have patterns explicitly identified as “Māori strums” begun to appear in musical instruction books: see Dickison 2008:26.) The phrase “having a bit of a tutū” even suggests a Māori-language analogue for “vernacular”.[5] Interviewees learned various styles in this way—including country, rock, and reggae—but the Māori strumming style was often what people recalled hearing and learning first, whether in the 1950s or 1980s. “I was born with it, brought up with it”, Claude Hooper declared (interview).

While technically accessible, the Māori strumming style is not without challenges, notably creating the percussive “*jik*”. Like riding a bicycle, this requires mastery of a basic knack: a technique that must be figured out for oneself in terms of one’s own body. Significantly, self-teaching had resulted in various *jik* techniques among interviewees. While most damped the strings, different parts of the hand were used—palm, heel, thumb side, or outer side—and some briefly lifted their chording fingers to further muffle the strings.

Such variations were part of a broader pattern. Some players used their thumb to strum with (somebody dubbed these “thumb players”); others used their whole hand or a pick; one pressed thumb and forefinger together as if holding a pick; and another used pick

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[5] “Tutū” has been translated as “impudent, stand up, meddle, stirred up” (Ryan 1997), which in musical terms could denote “a bit of a jam” or “mucking around”.

and fingers. Individuation was also apparent in how the strings were addressed, how arms and wrists moved, and it arose with left-handed people who had learned with only right-handed guitars available. Michael Priest thus turned the guitar upside down (treble strings uppermost):

> ***Michael Priest*:** It was always difficult. But I kept watching… My brother-in-law used to play… and I used to follow along and watch his finger placements... like in the mirror.... [My] hands used to be all cut, my fingers, from coming down on the sharpest [string]… that's why I've gone to playing with a pick. [A]

Because his sustained down strums tend to most forcefully strike the middle and upper bass strings of an upside-down guitar, Michael's playing accentuates a middle register, giving it a unique tonal quality.

Indeed, vernacular self-teaching processes probably impart an idiosyncratic flavour to every person's version of the Māori strumming style. Each might be said to have their own strumming "idiolect"—a linguistic term meaning "the speech of one person... in one style" (Trudgill 1995:25)—inflected by personal upbringing, playing history, personality, and body, and unhindered by the standardising tendencies of formal teaching. Nor were people's personal versions static. People I interviewed often took the liberty of "mucking around" with strums and techniques during the interview.

The Māori strumming style is also highly accessible. While some people I interviewed were highly skilled musicians, others did not really consider themselves "guitarists" at all. Claude Hooper, for instance, rates himself "a shocking guitarist", yet the style's essentials are clearly evident in his playing. I met people who were similarly modest at Ngāti Pōneke, too. "I can't really play the guitar" or "the Māori strum is the only thing I can play" were typical disclaimers. The Māori strumming style, then, can span the realms of accomplished musicianship and "music without musicians".

Styles and strumming

Before looking further at the Māori strumming style, it is necessary clarify our understanding of the concept of "style". Various musical phenomena—including genres, song forms, and ways of singing or playing—can be considered "styles". Styles

are often defined in terms of common formal characteristics: "constant form—and sometimes constant elements, qualities, and expression—in the art of an individual or group" (Meyer Schapiro quoted in Merriam 1964:114). But as Steven Feld notes, the approaches and concepts which give rise to "constant form" are also important (Keil and Feld 1994:109-112). Styles, he proposes, are cultural constructs for generating musical meaning and must be seen within a broader sociohistorical context.

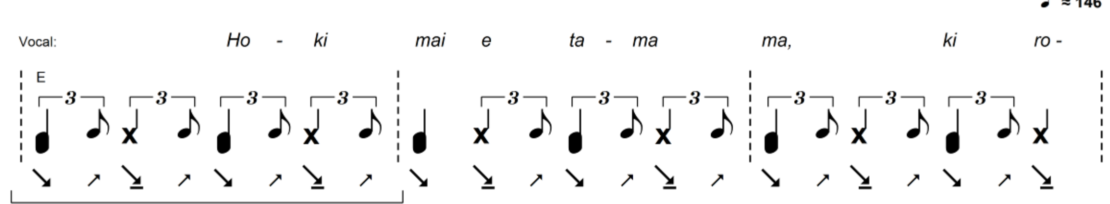
To understand the Māori strumming style as a "style" requires an appreciation of the experiences and struggles of the Māori people during the twentieth century. In this regard, Charles Keil offers a helpful theory of how such styles are formed. Musical styles, he argues, are a "reflection of class forces" and are usually created by groups who are struggling "to keep control of their social identities in music" (Keil and Feld 1994:202). "The very purpose of style is to establish a hegemony of feelings"—so as to bind such groups together in the face of the dominant culture—with "the naming of musics... itself a declaration of consolidation" (209). But style formation is also a dialectical process. With the American blues, for instance, the stereotypes of the dominant white culture had to be "accepted and transcended" by black musicians for the style to "grow and prosper", for it to be turned into "black identity" (206, 199). Musical styles, Keil argues, must be seen as sites of cultural negotiation within a wider power struggle. This theory will be revisited elsewhere in the case study. For now, however, we will examine some strumming patterns I have recorded which point toward an underlying formal consistency with the Māori strumming style.

Strumming patterns—or strums—are a basic component of the Māori style. Some strums demonstrated to me were short cyclical patterns, like the *jingajik*, others cycled over a longer span or shifted with vocal melody phrasing or song structures. Spontaneous embellishments, ties, and rests were also often added. One way of broadly understanding these strums is to place them into a typology: an arbitrary system of types devised for research purposes. During an interview with Māori scholar and composer Charles Royal (Ngāti Raukawa, Marutūaha, Ngāpuhi) on 12 February 2009 (see DVD3), a six-part strum typology defined by metric/rhythmic differences emerged. Although probably not comprehensive, many strums can be placed in this typology, which will be presented over the next three pages. For each type, one of Charles' strums and a second interviewee example are transcribed. Each selection identifies a possible

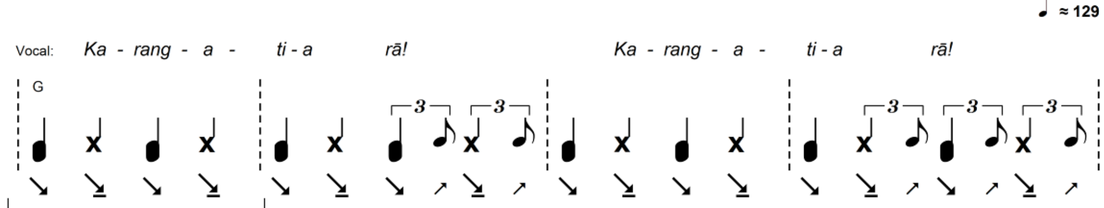
underlying pattern with a horizontal bracket and also shows ornamentation in simplified form (such transcriptions cannot convey performance subtleties like half-brushed notes, suggestions of sixteenth-note triplets, slides into chords, and such like). Most performances were not video-taped and—except for Michael Priest's examples with which I am very familiar—strumming-direction notations deduced from audio are given in grey; lyrics, guitar chords, and tempo are also given. Explanations for each type follow the transcriptions.

Typology of strumming patterns

1. *Swing strums*

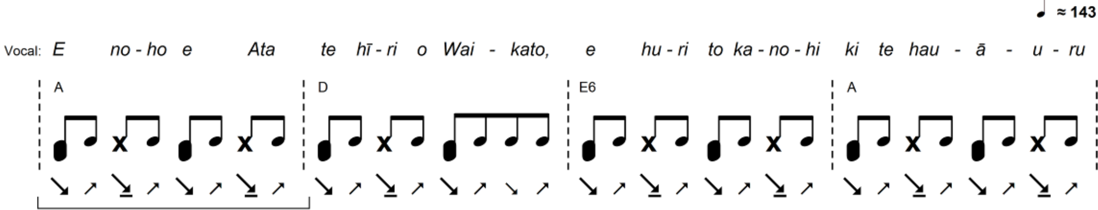


'Hoki mai e tama ma' excerpt, Charles Royal (DVD3:0.24-1.22).

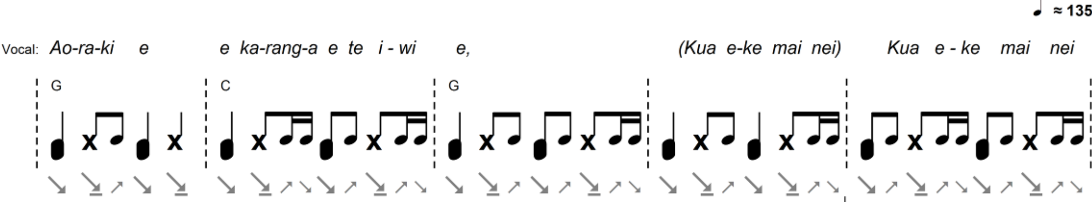


'Karangatia rā' excerpt, Michael Priest, interview A (CD7).

2. *Straight strums*



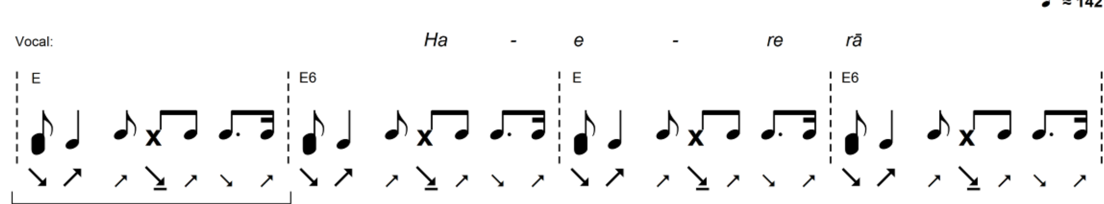
'E noho e Ata' excerpt, Charles Royal (DVD3:15.01-15.45).



'Hauraki e' excerpt, Jamie McCaskill, interview (CD8).

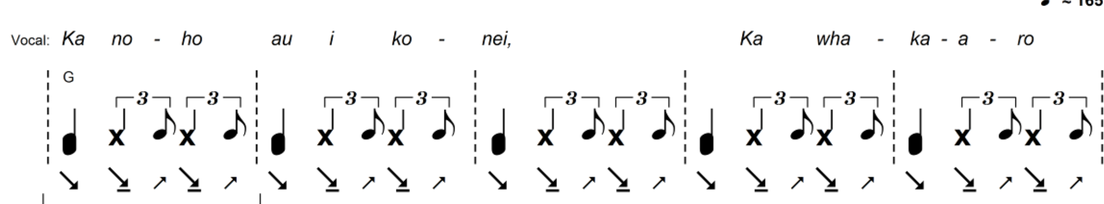
3. *Syncopated duple-time strums*

'Ten Guitars' excerpt, Charles Royal (DVD3:10.09-12.08).

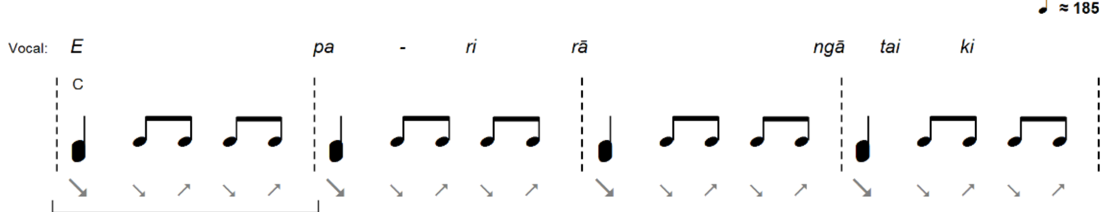


'Taku rau Kōtuku' excerpt, Michael Priest, recorded 19/11/2009.

4. *Triple-time strums*

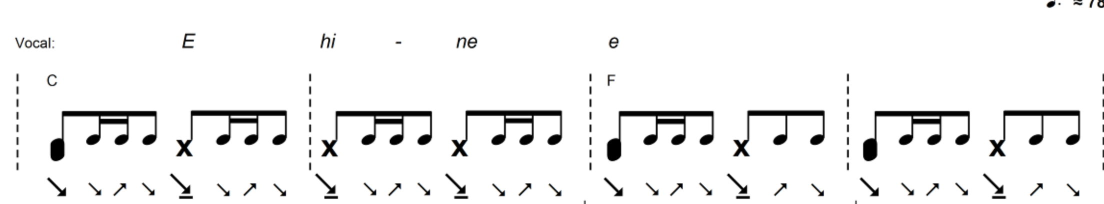


'Ka noho au' excerpt, Charles Royal (DVD3:6.39-7.49).

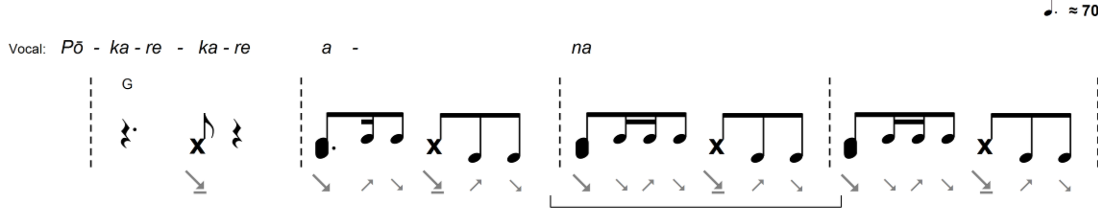


'E pari rā' excerpt, Ray Isaacs, interview (CD9)

5. *Compound-time strums*

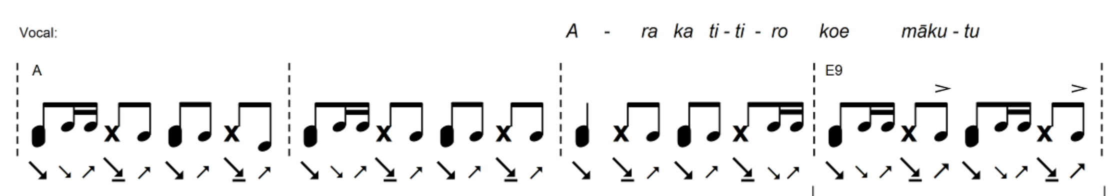


'Pōkarekare ana' excerpt, Charles Royal (DVD3:24.49-26.29).



‘Pōkarekare ana’ excerpt, Jamie McCaskill, interview (CD10).

6. *“Pacific island” strums*



‘Ara ka titiro’ excerpt, Charles Royal (DVD3:13.01-13.53).

‘Chulu chululu’ excerpt, Ray Isaacs, interview (CD11).

Swing strums combine duple meter with an eighth-note swing feel. Charles Royal described the first strum here as the *dumdejak*, noting that it was firmly associated with the 1946 song, ‘Hoki mai e tama ma’ (originally ‘Tomo mai e tama ma’). Another swing strum I sometimes saw played at Ngāti Pōneke divided quarter-notes into triplets, producing a strong 12/8 metrical feel:

Straight strums combined duple meters with a “straighter” (i.e. non-swing) feel. These strums often incorporated what people variously called “double strums”, “double-timing”, or “shimmies”, where eighth-notes were divided into two faster strums.

Syncopated duple-time strums incorporated syncopation, usually on the first or second eighth-note off-beat of each measure. The second example was played with a rather softer syncopation. Syncopation was sometimes emphasised by double strumming or

arpeggiating the preceding quarter-note (either raking the strings or using a *rasgueado*-type technique), the implied rhythm often emerging as:

The arpeggiation method was also tentatively identified by Charles Royal as a "Spanish technique", an influence he connected with certain 1950s-1960s popular songs (e.g., 'A White Sport Coat (and a Pink Carnation)', 'Spanish Harlem').

Triple-time strums tended to emphasise the three main on-beats or used an eighth-note swing feel. The second example here shows open strumming without percussive strums.

Compound-time strums were often used for slower songs in compound meters, with the "tock tick" of the two main beats interspersed with lighter sixteenth-notes. People often lifted the chording fingers on upbeats thereby adding a simple riff to each measure. The examples—both being 'Pōkarekare ana'—also demonstrate the variations between different peoples' strums for the same song (see also Figure 6).

"Pacific island" strums were identified by interviewees as being influenced by other Polynesian ukulele and guitar styles, particularly in terms of their rapid sixteenth-note strumming and syncopations. With these strums, some players used more complicated "finger strumming" techniques—as they will be called here—which might be considered part of a Māori strumming sub-style. The complexity of Ray Isaac's strumming on 'Chulu chululu' was such that I could not determine the actions precisely from the recording and so the musical transcription here is much simplified.

"There is really no perfect one way to strum"

The typology of strumming patterns shows the Māori style being used to accompany songs in different meters, tempos, and rhythms, along with some extra associated techniques. It also reveals how open it has been to the incorporation of outside musical influences (e.g., from popular music and other Polynesian cultures). As Ray Isaacs emphasised, the style offers many possibilities:

Ray Isaacs**:** There is really no perfect one way to strum.... I thought I had the only strum, but I've seen strums that I never thought existed! My point is there is no one way. It's just full of variations... it's just wide. You can't *lock* the strum down to being "the strum".

Nonetheless, "strumming" does define the style and the basic *jingajik* components—as encoded in the various onomatopoeic names—reoccur with most patterns: one might say the *jingajik*'s simplified "band" is recombined into a new bass-rhythm-drums arrangement each time. The broad physicality of strumming also seems important. With my own playing, the main sustained/percussive action sets up a strong physical rhythm to which embellishments can be added with extra wrist or arm movements.

While some Māori-style strums are fairly simple to play, people's strumming idiolects may have an idiosyncratic virtuosity that defies precise imitation. "My brother's got a weird strum", Himiona Grace told me. "Something I can't even… this extra little thing that almost throws it out of rhythm" (interview). Another person could not readily explain how he "finger strummed". Even Claude Hooper, self-described "shocking guitarist", played a Pacific Island strum I found difficult to fathom. Ultimately perhaps, because of its self-taught character, everybody's stylistic idiolect is subtly inimitable. As with informal speech, each person becomes master of their own "indescribable vernacular flavour" (Cicero 1971:147) of strumming—"indescribable" because the Māori style has never been standardised and formally taught.

It should be noted, too, that people I interviewed often played other guitar styles—including those learned through formal training—and sometimes blended these into demonstrations of the Māori strumming style, adding blues licks, for instance, or jazz passing-chords. The Māori style, then, is not rigidly compartmentalised but can be "made our own" according to an individual's musical knowledge and inclinations. Indeed, Charles Royal identified his version as "my take", while Ray Isaacs described consciously supplementing the *jungajuk* and other strums with altered chords, bass runs, and other examples of what he termed "warm fluffies", so as to make his style as entertaining as possible at parties and in street music performance (see Appendix 8). People's strumming idiolects, then, can be seen as the outcome of a reconciliation between personal imperatives and a collective style.

"The Māori chords"

The Māori guitar strumming style is also identified with a certain approach to chords. People repeatedly told me that the use of just three chords—what one interviewee jokingly referred to as "the Māori chords"—was typical.[6] "I only play three chords", Claude Hooper declared. "But three chords can play every song you like" (interview). This idea is also enshrined in a widespread humorous saying to the effect that a Māori guitarist can play any song in the world with just three chords (cf. Du Fresne 1995; Malo 1995; Ferguson 2002:45).While "three chord" philosophies are attached to various other musical practices (e.g., country, punk rock) and many songs use only three chords, the notion of three all-purpose "Māori chords"—like the *jingajik*'s simplified "ensemble"—has special significance here for expressing an underlying conception of the Māori style as a self-sufficient accompaniment.

As it happened, performance demonstrations showed that these proverbial three chords could come in a variety of configurations. Some performers identified them as the standard diatonic combination of tonic, subdominant, and dominant chords (e.g., G major, C major, and D major), a chordal foundation upon which myriad songs in popular genres like blues, country, and rock are built. Others associated the strumming style with certain altered chords (also widely used around the world). Major-sixths and dominant-ninths were apparently typical "party chords". Charles Royal described his father—"one of those... Māori guitarists who could put any song in the universe into three chords"—as relying on a combination of tonic major-sixth, subdominant-major, and dominant-ninth (e.g., A6, D, E9). Major tonality, too, was perceived as characteristic, especially for party singalongs. "When I'm playing party chords and getting going", Jamie McCaskill observed, "it's always major" (interview). See Figure 4 for some different examples of so-called "Māori chords" or "party chords".

Another interesting aspect relating to these chords was that many people I talked with did not know their exact technical names (e.g., "D dominant ninth"), details that were presumably not transmitted due to informal learning processes. Claude Hooper also

[6] Interestingly, the ethnomusicologist Karl Neuenfeldt has heard the term "Māori chords" used in this connection in Australian Torres Strait communities (pers. comm., December 2008).

suggested that freedom from Western music terms and theories was emblematic of "Māori" musicality:

> ***Claude Hooper:*** They have no idea what the chord is... that it's F major or C ninth. It's just a change in sound.... A European will buy a guitar and he buys the book... whereas a Māori just picks it up and sticks his fingers somewhere. It's a feel thing.... They've just heard the chord and "Hey bro! Gissa look at your fingers". Bang, that's it.

So-called "Māori chords", then, could also be conceived as fingering shapes on the fretboard, partly chosen for their convenience. Indeed, some tonic-subdominant-dominant combinations, like those used by Charles Royal's father, lie within a handy three- or four-fret span. Certain chord shapes, because they can be slid up and down the guitar neck without the fingering needing to be changed, are particularly versatile—including the two "party chords" in Figure 4. Such "slide-able" shapes also allow for certain embellishments, like chromatic slides into chord changes, to be easily added.

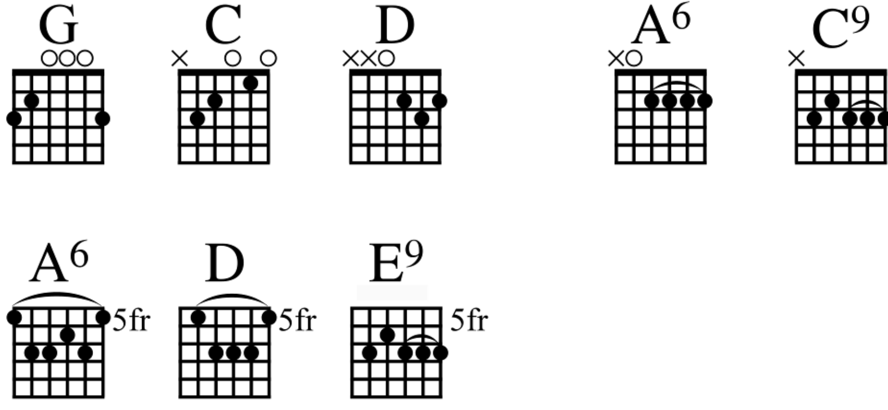


Figure 4: **Selection of "Māori chords" or "party chords"**

Left: two three "Māori chords" combinations. Right: two "party chords".

Despite the apparent significance of the all-purpose three chord concept, most interviewees had a much wider chord vocabulary. Some were accomplished jazz players. Certain unusual chords—such as partial barre chords including open strings—were also played, with some people declaring they had discovered these for themselves. Claude Hooper again linked such phenomena to "Māori" musicality: "by moving their finger from one string... it's another dimension and they don't really realise they've just

played an eleventh" (interview). "Māori chords" can thus acquire the same quirky inventiveness characteristic of strumming actions.

Origin and spread

The Māori guitar strumming style is a modern musical style that was probably consolidated some time after the instrument was widely taken up by Māori in the 1920s. One person remembered hearing it in the late-1940s and archival recordings push the timeframe back a little further. Yet there are no published accounts of the style's origin. Nor have sufficient archival materials yet been traced to authoritatively reconstruct its early development. This section discusses some possibilities for the style's origin and spread, starting with interpretations made by interviewees and pursuing certain hypotheses using archival evidence. It also suggests that the style's indistinct history helps support the typically-vernacular way it is approached.

Early in the research, I was puzzled by how little seemed to be known about the Māori strumming style's origin. Had it been created by a particular musician, iwi, or Māori concert party? Nobody I talked with had any definite answers. Kapa haka practitioners knew of no established stories about this. People had "never thought about it before". Yet one widespread assumption did seem to exist: the strumming style had been created by Māori. In the absence of more detailed traditions, Allan Thomas notes, such ideas in themselves can be regarded as "miniature myths of origin" that make a positive statement (1996:110).

The assumption that the strumming style had a pan-Māori origin was expressed in various ways. Some people spoke of it as a way Māori had put "their own stamp" on the guitar; others mentioned the "natural rhythms" of Māori music embodied in the style. The common term "Māori strum" also implies a kind of collective creation. While noting the significance of overseas influences, especially from Hawai'ian music, Charles Royal also linked the strumming style's emergence with the spread of certain classic mid-twentieth century Māori songs using the basic strum:

Charles Royal: It is certainly something that's come up and been developed through hundreds... of different guitarists. It's not Jimmy Page, a single guitarist, coming up with a certain

> style of doing things. It's a hundred million different guitarists all over the country... hooked into similar sets of songs... songs that are so popular that people sing them all the time and it's through [their] regular appearance... that this particular style of guitar playing has gone around different communities and developed and grown. [A]

The "myth" of collective Māori origin, then, makes a positive statement of Māori interconnectedness and unity. Implicitly, the style is shared by everybody. Nonetheless, once I broached the questions of origins, people came up with many fresh conjectures. Among the possibilities they raised were:

An Hawai'ian influence on early Māori concert parties
The influence of traditional Māori dance actions
The borrowing of swing tunes for waiata-ā-ringa in the WWII era
The characteristic topics and spirit of these WWII-era Māori compositions
Use of guitars by Māori Battalion of the New Zealand Army members during WWII
The post-WWII Māori urban migration contributing to the style's spread
Maori strumming being a rural style that became urbanised
The Howard Morrison Quartet (a 1958-64 vocal group) helping popularise the *jingajik*
Subsequent popular music and Pacific Island influences expanding the style

The rest of this section will consider some of these ideas in relation to 1920s-1940s archival materials, followed by a discussion of the urban migration of the 1950s and 1960s. Several other points will be examined in subsequent chapters.[7]

Documentary evidence of early Māori use of the guitar is strongest in regard to Māori concert party performances. Indeed, the earliest photographs with Māori guitarists I have traced are of famous concert parties formed in the early-1920s, like Te Pou o Mangatawhiri (TPM) and the Rātana concert party (see Plate 21). The idea "of entertaining and fund-raising by Maori concert" was apparently novel at the time, according to Michael King, except in the thriving tourism industry around Rotorua (1977:119). Innovation was also evident in the concert programmes of such groups, where traditional poi and haka items were interspersed with piano ballads, comic skits, and hula dances. The use of BMG, jazz, and Hawai'ian ensemble accompaniments was also ground-breaking. Indeed, TPM has been touted as "the first group to popularise

[7] A topic not considered in this ethnography—but which could be well worth exploring—is the relationship between the Māori guitar strumming style and other Polynesian stringed instrument styles.

stringed instrument backing for Maori songs”, through using ukuleles, mandolins, banjos, violins, and guitars, the only such claim I have discovered (119).

Plate 21: **Members of the Rātana Band, ca.1924**

Alexander Turnbull Library F-17026-1/1

Archival newsreel films of such groups provide important clues about the styles played by early Māori guitarists (for a checklist, see Appendix 6). Hawai’ian-style ukulele/steel-guitar/backing-guitar combinations were especially popular, with the backing guitarists in such ensembles generally using thumb-picks to play an alternating-bass accompaniment, with strummed chords on off-beats and occasional single-note bass runs. This approach can be seen in a 1931 newsreel of Ana Hato and Deane Waretini singing ‘Pō Atarau’.[8] Some accompaniments, however, diverged markedly from the Hawai’ian format. A 1934 newsreel from Otaki, for instance, shows a poi accompanied by ukulele, accordion, and two guitars, one guitarist using an alternating-bass style with country-style turnarounds and the other playing a percussive strumming style reminiscent of swing guitarist Django Reinhardt (see DVD1).[9]

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[8] *Movietone News: Movietone films a Maori Idyll* (1931), viewable online at: http://www.thoughtequity.com/video/clip/48050183_4300.do [accessed 27 January 2012].

[9] For other innovative accompaniments, see 1938 recordings of Princess Te Puea Herangi’s concert party (Archives of Māori and Pacific Music, RNZ2.1, RNZ4.6).

Recordings of Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū Māori Club by the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) in Gisborne around 1940 are possibly the earliest to clearly document what can now be identified as the Māori guitar strumming style. Their performances of the waiata-ā-ringa 'Arohaina mai' and 'Te hokowhitu toa' feature a guitarist playing a simple "*jing jik*" strum, each on-beat strum doubling the group's takahia (foot stamps). Both songs were written by composer Tuini Ngawai (1910-1965) in honour of the Māori Battalion of the New Zealand Army on the eve of their departure for World War II, and use the tunes of current popular songs. Both performances were recently issued on a compilation that includes several other tracks where Battalion members can be heard playing similar accompaniments (Various Artists 2006). In January 1946, the Battalion returned. A newsreel of their welcome in Wellington includes a Taranaki group performing the waiata-ā-ringa 'Pa mai' with a lightly-ornamented *jing jik* guitar accompaniment (see DVD2). A waiata-ā-ringa recorded at the small Taranaki settlement of Taiporohenui in November 1946 by the NZBS also features the style (Thomas 2004:CD track 17).

A full survey of archival material from this period could well shed further light on the Māori strumming style's emergence, but these 1940-1946 recordings constitute the earliest examples I have traced. For many Māori people I talked with, too, the 1940s was the earliest decade they associated with the style. Many of the classic Māori songs considered by Charles Royal to have assisted its spread (e.g., 'Arohaina mai', 'Pa mai', 'Hoki mai e tama ma') were written in this era. Charles also noted that upbeat rhythm was an important feature of these compositions:

Charles Royal: Composers back in those days really knew how to get the Māori language bubbling along with this kind of song style, which was new to our communities. They were fluent speakers, so they could get the music of the language flowing well with the music of this [*plays an upbeat strum pattern*]. The language is really influential upon the shape of a song, the rhythm of a song, the quality of the song.... [These songs are] generally joyous songs, even though they're singing about quite sad events: many people have died. Or they're singing out of poverty.... That's what I note about the song composition of that time. [*Plays an upbeat strum pattern.*] It's got sunshine in it, you know? [B]

The 1940s have also been identified as the moment when guitars replaced pianos as the main accompaniment for Māori concert parties. According to Te Puoho Katene, the piano had given

> a reassuring framework of broad chordal accompaniment and carried the singing forward in strength... [and] was ideal when the audience came to the marae, but its transportation was a problem when the group performed at another venue. Guitars replaced the pianos in the late 1940s when the concert parties travelled to their audiences; to hotel venues and tourist ships. (1991:5; cf. Armstrong 1986:57)

Overall, then, archival evidence suggests that the strumming style was probably being performed by the 1930s and became established around the time guitars found a niche in Māori cultural performance in the late-1940s. (The switch from piano/string-ensemble to guitar will be discussed further in Chapter 7.) The style's swift spread was probably facilitated by Māori customs like holding frequent hui (gatherings) at marae for meetings, weddings, and tangihanga (funerals), which often include both ceremonial and informal music-making, and bring together people from different communities (Salmond 1976).

The archival evidence also points to Hawai'ian, country, and jazz influences on Māori music-making during the period when the strumming style emerged. Indeed, ongoing use of major-sixth chords may well reveal a lingering Hawai'ian influence, while strums with a swing feel may carry an echo of the popular tunes used for classic 1940s waiata-ā-ringa. A comparison between some popular 1920s-1930s backing rhythms and the 1940 Gisborne *jing jik* (see Figure 5) also shows that many incorporated similar off-beat emphases (including percussive textures not represented in the transcriptions). Contemporaneous parallels can also be found in the "*la pompe*" rhythm style of Django Reinhardt's "gypsy jazz" ensembles of the 1930s (see Dregni 2008:61), as well as in the accompaniments used by American vocal groups like The Ink Spots.

Figure 5: **Comparison of ukulele and guitar accompaniment styles**

The examples of ukulele/guitar accompaniments in this figure are taken from various sources and retain the original notation (with chord names added); they may have performance textures not rendered in the source. Guitar examples are an octave higher than what the actual guitar pitches would be. Hawai'ian straight ukulele strum (Stillman 1998:391) was used in *hapa haole*; Jimmie Rodgers-style back-up (Sokolow 1997:16) is a typical early country guitar accompaniment; "sock rhythm" (Chappell 2007:118) was a guitar style used in Western swing; and swing jazz "comping" (Schuller 1989:228) was played by guitarists like Freddie Green. The 'Arohaina mai' strum is transcribed from Various Artists 2006.

A less well-documented strand of Māori music-making associated with the strumming style's emergence is informal singalongs. Again, photographs provide some early evidence, including a 1937 photograph of freezing workers singing together (see Plate 22). A study made in the late-1930s of a rural Māori community also mentions that singing to "the strumming of guitar and ukulele" was becoming popular at beach parties (Beaglehole 1946:159). The style's strongest associations with party singing, however, belong to the post-WWII era of the Māori urban migration.

Plate 22: **Striking freezing workers in Auckland**
Weekly News, 20/1/1937

The mass migration of Māori from rural areas to urban centres was a major event in twentieth century New Zealand history. In 1936, only around seventeen percent of the Māori population was urban; by 1962 this had risen to sixty-two percent; and by 1986, eighty-three percent (Belich 2001:471). Some interviewees suggested the strumming style was itself a "migrant" from rural areas. Certainly, the pan-Māori character of many new urban communities would have contributed to its spread.

The main factors driving the Māori migration were better employment opportunities, higher wages, and new entertainment possibilities in urban areas (Metge 1964:128). Yet while some Māori prospered in the cities, many experienced relatively low income levels and poor housing compared with Pākehā. They also encountered other special challenges:

> Migrants newly arrived from rural areas were faced with a set of Pakeha suburban *mores* not evident in Maori communities. There were difficulties with managing salaried incomes... with budgeting.... There were instances of overt discrimination in employment, accommodation and hotel bars that arose from Maori and Pakeha having to interact widely for the first time.... Urbanisation also created the need to

> redefine aspects of Maoriness: the nature of extended family in the urban context; how to hold hui... [and] keep live links with rural tribal bases.... (King 2003:472)

New institutions like cultural clubs and urban marae helped migrants put down new roots (Walker 1990:200-201). Parties were another—more informal—way of creating a friendlier environment. People I interviewed recalled the flourishing party scenes of the 1960s and 1970s. "Back then a lot of parties were guitar parties", Michael Priest remarked of Wellington. "You'd go down the road and there'd be a guitar out and they'd be singing" (interview B). In an essay about a celebrated artwork by Michael Parekowhai, *Patriot*, Robert Leonard offers a rare perception of the guitar style's significance in this regard:

> It was in the 1960s that the guitar became the ubiquitous 'happy Maori' party instrument. And the boom-chucka-boom-chucka 'Maori strum'... was certainly distinctive. A sing-along instrument, the guitar was part of the furniture, something to be passed around – joint property. You didn't have to bring one to a party, there would always be one there. It symbolised and facilitated community.... It was a portable meeting house. (1999:10)

These historical associations are also underlined by a general sense I have gained that guitar singalongs are no longer quite so ubiquitous as they once were, at least in the Wellington region. "A lot of those have gone by the wayside now", Michael Priest told me, adding that listening to recorded music was now much more common at parties. Writers have also alluded a national waning of such practices (e.g., see Anon. 2005:20).

This section has sketched a history of the Māori strumming style in relation to some wider historical developments. This history also clarifies just how long—over seven decades—the style has been "not thought about". Some explanations for this lack of formal discussion will be presented in subsequent chapters but, needless to say, it should not be interpreted negatively. People have clearly valued the style in more informal ways (like the *jingajik* names). Even so, along with the "myth" of common Māori ownership, the style's not-thought-about status has probably supported the vernacular way it has long been approached, freeing it from the weight of precedent that accumulates around more formalised stylistic traditions.

Party singalongs

Informal Māori singalongs—at family celebrations, domestic parties, community social events, or hui at marae—are a primary performance context for the guitar strumming style. Underlining this connection are an array of colloquial terms that I encountered during the research, such as "guitar party", "party guitarist", "party chords", "party strum", "party guitar" or "party banger", and "party songs". Parties and social gatherings held considerable significance by Māori people I interviewed. "It's actually a huge part of our social life and upbringing", Himiona Grace told me (interview). Socialising is a medium for maintaining close contact with extended family or whānau—what Hirini Mead identifies as "the basic building block of the whole [Māori] social system" (2003:212)—along with friends, workmates, and acquaintances. As noted in the tramping singsong study, parties are implicitly vernacular domains, "focused gatherings" where music-making can be informally shaped to suit the needs of participants (Pickering and Green 1987b). The following subsections look at the Māori strumming style in this context. Given that I conducted only limited fieldwork in this area (see above), the discussion relies chiefly on interviews and is more exploratory than elsewhere.

Functions of party strumming

In some respects, the handful of guitar parties I attended in the 2009-2011 period were much like other parties: relaxed socialising, people talking, drinking, joking, and mingling, a stereo playing. Later on, someone might bring out a guitar and a small group would start singing and eventually—not always—a singalong might get underway. People I interviewed identified certain basic qualities of Māori strumming accompaniment that suited this setting. The ability of strums like the *jingajik* to cut through a background hubbub received special mention:

Claude Hooper: Duma *chuka* duma *chuka* duma *chuka*... it's so you can hear the strum. It's very ingenious... the Māori has designed his own strum, his own style... and the reason for it is party dominance. It's being able to be heard above a whole room of boozers and talkers and frolicking people...

Charles Royal: Getting the arm going down... and accentuating it is really important, so it's very clear: "here's the beat". Because it's not about an individual's inspiration.... It's about the group that's here: "we are together and I just happen to be playing the guitar". We're just here for the group. In order to get the unity in the group, nice clear accentuation of "one two three four" is really important. If you don't have clear articulation of beats you diminish the goodwill of the group... nice and regular like a heartbeat. [B]

Even with loud group singing, one guitar can still provide basic rhythmic and harmonic guidance. The style thus encourages uninhibited participation and can coexist with background socialising. The characteristic use of open and altered chords also encourages participation by supporting a type of harmonising—a central unison blended with individually-configured descants—often found in Māori group singing. "By doing these open sixths... it accommodates both melody and harmony", Claude Hooper noted, "it tends to give [the people singing] more licence" (interview). The style's insistent sonic contrasts also radiate outwards through the party, creating an awareness of the possibility of singing, extending the invitation to participate to allcomers. The strong sense that the strumming style helps fulfil a community-making imperative in the party context suggests that—as with the tramping club singsongs—a kind of "ideal society" is being modelled with this music-making (Small 1987:74), the nature of which will be discussed below.

The style's party-functionality is also related to the simplicity of its basic ingredients (even if some players develop sophisticated variants). Playing a *jingajik* and three "party chords" does not demand total mental concentration, but allows guitarists to sing, interact and make eye contact with other party-goers, and play for long periods. "Few bottles of beer and get some rhythm going and this hand goes, and just goes and goes and goes", one person concluded (anonymous ["Mel"], interview). The style is virtually "party proof". In the haze of late night gatherings, where instruments might be shared around—to refresh the repertoire or relieve tired fingers—even the most basic *jingajik* might suffice. "About the only time they'll chuck me the guitar is if their fingers are raw", Charles Hooper noted. "But at parties everyone's fonged... doesn't matter if the guitar's out of tune, long as that beat's there" (interview). This way of playing the guitar—with its self-sufficient bass-rhythm-drums ensemble and all-purpose "party

chords"—thus allows a single acoustic guitar to serve an entire party all night long if necessary.

Interviewees also observed that acoustic guitars suited knockabout socialising for being portable, inexpensive, and physically robust. But I heard many reports of guitar damage. One person even recalled a family member's "party trick" of smashing the party instrument at the end of the night! (Jamie McCaskill, interview.) Interestingly, several people owned a special "party guitar"—an inexpensive or old instrument—they did not mind getting bumped or scratched. A music shop located near where I live even had a special section dedicated to refitted "party bangers" (see Plate 23).

Plate 23: **Party bangers**

Michael Brown

This accompaniment style can also leave long-term marks on guitars, probably due to being played loudly for party singing or kapa haka. Several peoples' instruments I looked at during the present research were worn away below the soundhole from the strike-marks of tens of thousands of strums. Such markings testify to the exuberant physicality that can be released in key performance contexts for this guitar style.

The party guitarist role

Being the party guitarist is a special role that comes with both group expectations and, given that parties are vernacular domains, considerable liberties. This section looks at aspects of party guitar-playing from the individual perspective of interviewee Jamie McCaskill. Born in 1979, Jamie has worked as a fisherman, and more recently as a

professional actor, playwright, and musician in Wellington (see Plate 24). Although left-handed, he learned to play the guitar right-handed. Finding it difficult to use a pick hindered him playing the kinds of music popular with his teenage peers (like the heavy metal group Metallica), but in his early-twenties he rediscovered the party guitar role he had learned from his father.

Plate 24: **Jamie McCaskill**

Michael Brown

Jamie McCaskill: Dad brought me a guitar [when I was ten], so I'd just play along with Dad at parties.... It was all about how you infect other people with the music... with the guitar. There was also that pull of being the "life of the party"... getting everyone to sing... the whole community in your garage or in somebody's lounge... having a good time.... It's all about making people happy.

During the interview, Jamie performed various songs, and gave a live commentary on the various ornaments and accidents, what can be recognised as "participatory discrepancies" (Keil and Feld 1994), that occur in the vernacular party domain.

> See these little emphases when it comes to different bits in the song... leading up to a chord change. Also... there's that subconscious thing of trying to work out where your rhythm is with your mouth and your hand at the same time... find the median and you're away.... A lot of it's impulsive as well... you've got your certain rhythm and then I'll hear

> something in my head, like two seconds before I'm going to play it... When it comes to accidents, yes, accidents are awesome: "Whoa, I didn't even mean to do that!"

He also observed that parties allowed for mucking around and impromptu arrangements.

> Drive it a little bit more, then bring it back. Kind of manipulate people through the strum... there's always room to try stuff... because no one's there looking at you playing guitar. No one's there to criticise you as a musician... once they start getting into it and singing, even the people that sit back and just listen... there is no pressure to succumb to everybody's whims.... It's funny, if you change the strum to a song that everybody knows... like reggae up some Beatles and people go, "Oh choice! This is all good" ...just get into it… sing along to it regardless.

Parties might feature more than one guitar, too, Jamie observed, prompting musical interplay and allowing for new songs and strums to be learned.

> If there's two guitars... you just follow along and get their style as well. Just complementing people and stuff.... I guess if I'm being the "alpha male" of the guitaring... people will get infected by me and will play the same; and vice versa.... which is cool. You're never going to learn anything else unless you watch other people.

> Yeah, [the guitar] gets shared around... that's the unwritten rule. "He's played enough, let this fella have a turn"... it's always different styles, that's what's good. Like I could play some Beatles at a party or an Elvis medley... pass it over and somebody will play Pearl Jam... you're constantly trying to... keep the atmosphere of what we've created alive, by keeping everybody tuned in to what you're playing, the kind of groove that's going on in the room at that moment.

"Happiness and smiles"

"Happiness" was a recurring theme in my discussions with people about guitar parties. "Happiness" not only denoted individual good feeling, but was understood as the collective enjoyment of whānau, friends, and everybody at the party—an emphasis that can be related to important Māori concept of "aroha": love, empathy, warmth, "all those feelings of empathy that link men together and men with God" (Metge 1976:67). If the purpose of musical style is to establish "a hegemony of feelings", as Charles Keil suggests, an irresistible state of mind, then fostering happiness and aroha in the party

context is perhaps one *raison d'être* of the Māori strumming style (Keil and Feld 1994:209). This section explores how the style can be seen as a party tool of vernacular transformation to this end.

"Party songs" are the musical resources to which such transformations are applied. People pointed to various kinds of songs as typical Māori singalong repertoire: classic Māori songs; popular numbers of the 1940s to 1980s era, including material by harmony groups like The Platters and rock 'n' roll numbers; 1960s hits by vocalists like Engelbert Humperdinck; and later rock, soul, and country songs. Although a detailed analysis of such material is beyond the scope of this ethnography, familiarity seems to be the obvious common factor. "People like to sing what they know", Jamie McCaskill affirmed. "It's way harder to play an original at a party" (interview).

A prevalence of major chords was one important aspect of the Māori strumming style's usage in the party context that interviewees drew attention to. "Major chords create happiness and smiles, so I'll use them in a party setting", Jamie McCaskill emphasised, "major chords—the happy ones" (cf. Duff 1990:26).[10] This predominance might be simply because preferred songs were those in a diatonic major tonality. Nevertheless, certain processes of musical change can be detected, as when songs that originally have numerous chord changes are reduced for simplicity's sake to a "party chord" combination like A6-D-E9. Certainly, such harmonic generalisation was evident in some demonstration performances. When interviewees played the iconic party song 'Ten guitars' (see more below), for instance, most of them simplified it to three chords and without the minor passing chords of the original (see Evans 1993 [1984]:291-293). Ultimately, though, the strong association people made between the style and use of happiness-creating major chords was itself significant: the identification of such musical qualities or processes—not necessarily unique in themselves—was a kind of "making-our-own process" by which important social values were spotlighted.

The imparting of upbeat rhythm was also associated with the style, especially through use of the popular party strum, the *jingajik*. For Charles Royal, the *jingajik*'s bouncy

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[10] An association between major scales/chords and emotions of happiness and joy is, of course, deeply embedded in Western music culture (see Levitin 2006:36-38). A closer analysis of such aspects of musical psychology in the Māori party singalong context could be another fruitful avenue for future research.

quality made it "a sunshine rhythm" (interview A). As Charles observes above, while the many mid-twentieth century Māori songs using this strum were about sad or tragic events, the strum helped imbue them with positive feeling. And, like the three so-called "party chords" or "Māori chords", the *jingajik* can be applied to many other songs, generalising their original rhythms to an infectious cheerful groove.

These transformations also facilitate another making-our-own customisation associated with the style: the creation of semi-continuous medleys sung to all-purpose strums like the *jingajik*. Like Jamie McCaskill, many people emphasised that once collective happiness had been achieved in a guitar singalong it was imperative to sustain this with an ongoing flow of songs. As Himiona Grace noted, the *jingajik* enabled you to "play for two hours and sing two hundred songs without stopping". "The strum never stops, it just keeps going and going and going for as long as people can sing" (interview). People also mentioned a song being repeated over and over again until another item was found. Enjoyment of ongoing rhythmic groove was also expressed by partygoers adding impromptu percussion: clacking spoons, scrunching plastic bags, stomping feet.[11]

The Māori guitar strumming style thus helps establish "hegemony of feelings"—an irresistible experience of shared happiness—at parties in several ways: the sonic contrasts and open chords encourage participation and unify singing, while the vernacular allows songs to be transformed into simpler but unmistakably-happy forms that merge as a stream of onflowing music. If the relationships of an "ideal society" are being modelled in this music-making (Small 1987), then they are of a harmonious, unified and enduring community founded on an ethos of aroha. Charles Royal's description of the *jingajik* as "like a heartbeat" serves as a fitting musical/social/emotional metaphor for the style's role in this "ideal society".

The hegemonic power of Māori party strumming helps account for its apparent popularity during the 1960s-1970s urban migration period. If the guitar "symbolised and facilitated community" for Māori migrants moving to an unfamiliar environment without traditional social networks (Leonard 1999:10), then the strumming style

[11] In the 1950s-1960s, Māori "gumboot parties" were apparently common in towns with large abattoirs, with the massed rhythmic stamping of workers' gumboots on floorboards being apparently audible from some distance (Lawrence Wharerau, pers. comm. 4/9/2009; cf. Hilliard 1960:153-154).

contained the promise of happy supportive community. The enormous local popularity of the 1967 Engelbert Humperdinck song, ‘Ten guitars’, the subject of Michael Parekowhai’s art installation mentioned above, provides some confirmation of these ideas (cf. Cawthorn 1996; Archer 2001). This popular party song was often described to me as “the Māori national anthem” and despite its overseas origin, the lyrics seem to directly invoke the collective aroha created at guitar parties, as with the chorus:

> Dance, dance, dance to my ten guitars,
> And very soon you’ll know just where you are –
> Thru’ the eyes of love you see a thousand stars,
> When you dance, dance, dance to my ten guitars.[12]

Also attesting to the ongoing popularity of ‘Ten guitars’ in the vernacular party domain are well-known lyric adaptations—e.g., substituting “hula” for “dance”—and the different strum accompaniments people play (see Figure 6). While some preserve the syncopation of the original Humperdinck single, the *jingajik* and other strums are also used. (‘Ten guitars’ is discussed further in Chapter 8.)

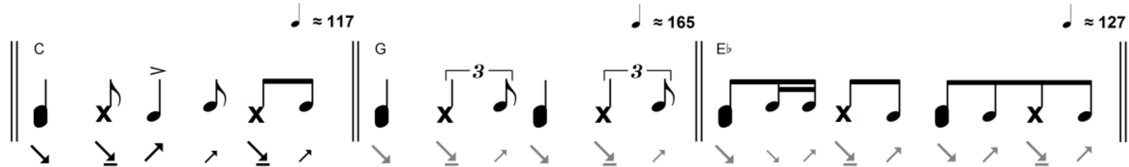

Figure 6: **‘Ten guitars’ strums**

From interviews with Michael Priest [A], Jamie McCaskill, and Ray Isaacs

The flavour of people’s stories about party strumming also reflects its convivial associations. Just mentioning “the *jingajik*” or “Māori strum” brought a smile to many people’s faces. The *jingajik*’s enduring popularity was one source of this amusement (e.g., “Oh, the old Māori strum? Again?”), as was its simplicity and repetitiveness. The sound-play of the strum’s many onomatopoeic names (*jingajik* etc.) also seems to be an abiding source of humour—they almost always came with a smile or a chuckle—thus further underlining the style’s convivial associations. Like party strumming, these vernacular terms have a kind of protean existence—some hover between off-the-cuff

[12] Words and music by Gordon Mills. Lyrics quoted from Evans (1993 [1984]).

description and established term—stemming from their origins in casual conversation. They are the linguistic mirror-image of the vernacular in the Māori strumming style.

Summary

This chapter has introduced the accompaniment style here called “the Māori guitar strumming style”. It has described how the style’s origins are at present unclear, but that it probably began to be performed in Māori music-making in the 1930s—a period of increasing interest in guitars and new popular music genres—with the earliest recording dating from around 1940. Thereafter, the style seems to have spread via informal transmission. Casual teaching or self-teaching was the predominant learning process for guitarists in the Wellington region that I have interviewed and spoken with. The style is based on a few accessible techniques, most of which are found in a basic strum known as the *jingajik* (and by other names), that may be rearranged to suit songs with various meters, rhythms, and tempos, the combined effect being in each case a stand-alone “ensemble” sound. It is also associated with the concept of three all-purpose “Māori chords” (so-called) or “party chords” and, in the party singalong context, with major key tonality.

The chapter has also considered the Māori guitar strumming style using the concept of vernacular. Through being learned informally, the style was intertwined with a vernacular approach from the very start for guitarists I consulted. In the absence of formal teaching and standardised “correct” versions, people had formed their own individualised idiolect. Variation also emerged in the strums which different people played for the same song. The style’s accessibility also encouraged the vernacular, allowing “non-guitarists” to develop strumming idiolects. Conversely, accomplished practitioners were able to apply more sophisticated musical knowledge. This vernacular approach has probably been supported by the minimal attention paid in public discourses to the style’s origin and history for over half a century—an aspect explored further in Chapter 8.

The chapter has also discussed a key performance arena for the strumming style: guitar party singalongs. Here, the strumming style has inherent practical value—clear accents that can be heard above background noise, open chords that stimulate harmony singing,

and a broad physicality built to withstand party distractions—such that a single guitar may supply an entire party's needs. As a classic vernacular domain of music-making, parties have also allowed individual guitarists to follow momentary impulses, have accidents, and learn new strums. Nonetheless, through the recognised effects of generalising rhythms and "party chords", the style was associated with deeper social goals: it helps support an experience of collective happiness that can be sustained indefinitely. This may well account for the strumming style's popularity during the Māori urban migration of the 1960s-1970s when parties provided urban enclaves of conviviality. Chapter 7 will examine another major performance context for the guitar strumming style: kapa haka.

Chapter 7

Kapa haka guitar accompaniment

Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington, 27 March 2010. Thirty-two members of Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club arrange themselves on the polished floorboards of the floodlit stage—women near the front, seated or kneeling, men standing to the rear. Near the back are stationed two guitarists: kapa haka veteran Michael Priest and myself. Out beyond the stage, we can dimly see the thousand-strong audience in the darkened auditorium. We are all barefoot, faces marked with moko (tattoo designs), clad in piupiu (flax kilts), the women with pari (woven bodices) and the men, tātua (woven belts). Save for our wiri (quivering hands), all is still. The audience quietens. Silence. Ever so softly Michael taps his guitar and we strum some guitar chords. Singing gently rises up: phrases from waiata-ā-ringa that invoke the group's past—"Karanga, karanga, karanga, karanga rā... Tangihia, tangihia... Ko taku whakapapa...." *Our tremolo strumming swells and sinks, then I hit the strings hard and my guitar rings out. Instantly, full-throated singing meets the driving strums*—"Ānei ngā uri o rātou mā... a o tātou tipuna..."*—and the formation swiftly unfolds into rows and clusters, the performers releasing a stream of synchronised actions. Women near the front step, turn gracefully, flashing eyes and smiles at the audience. Two men in defiant poses are lifted aloft at the rear. The guitars thrum in unison. Suddenly singing is supplanted by powerful rhythmic chanting, the men stamping forward in two columns, faces grimacing. At the vanguard, our kaea (leader) brandishes his patu (short club). Thirty-two right feet stamp together in united pulse, the group releasing a triumphant salvo of chant and gesture, seizing a final vivid* tableaux vivant. *Applause bursts forth from the auditorium. This is our whakaeke (entry) for the 2010 Ngā Whakataetae ā Rohe o Te Whanganui-ā-Tara (regional competitions).*

The prestigious performing arts of kapa haka—the current term for Māori cultural performance—are a major context in which the Māori guitar strumming style is utilised. The concert described above was for me the climax of a year's fieldwork at Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club (see Plate 30), and it serves as the backdrop to ask two important questions. How does guitar accompaniment fit into kapa haka? Is the Māori strumming style approached here in a vernacular way? This chapter seeks to answer

these questions by looking at various aspects of kapa haka guitar, drawing from my experiences with the Wellington group, Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club (Ngāti Pōneke; NPYMC), interviews, video recordings, written discourse, and other sources.

The chapter begins with some background information about Ngāti Pōneke and kapa haka, then discusses some basic functions of the guitar accompaniment, and learning and practising processes. Following on, it considers various features of kapa haka strumming, the guitarist's onstage role, and written commentary on the accompaniment. Overall, the chapter shows that guitars are tightly integrated into kapa haka. It also suggests some reasons why this particular instrument has been preferred over other options like the piano since the late-1940s (namely due to its portability, minimalism, and universality). The chapter also notes that while kapa haka guitar accompaniments are shaped in the vernacular domain, at least in my experience, the imperatives of competition finds them approached with increasing discipline during training. In this performance arena, then, the vernacular in the Māori strumming style may become subsumed by other musical values. Nonetheless, guitar accompaniment seems to have been only "informally institutionalised" in kapa haka practice generally, thus supporting its vernacular basis here and in other contexts.

Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club

My first visit to Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club was on Monday, 9 February 2009. The club's Monday night practices take place at Pipitea Marae in downtown Wellington (see Plate 25), situated near the Wellington Railway Station. A few days earlier I had been invited along by the club president, Bill Nathan, being instructed to enter through the back entrance and find my way. Around six o'clock, I ventured in, past the kitchen, through the main meeting house and into the busy wharekai (dining hall) where people were gathered.[1]

About forty children had just begun the junior-team practice supervised by two adult tutors. A roughly equal number of parents were there, some performing behind the children, others sat on chairs around the edge, talking quietly, one or two holding

[1] New visitors to marae are often formally welcomed through the pōwhiri process and while this occurred at NPYMC for special occasions, general visitors like me were usually welcomed more informally.

babies; several toddlers also roamed about. There was a strong family atmosphere. At a special table where club business was being transacted, I greeted Bill Nathan and he began introducing me to others. As I observed proceedings, signs of the club's long history were all around: newspaper clippings about 2007 seventieth anniversary celebrations pinned to a notice board; a cabinet filled with carved trophies and old photographs. New acquaintances discreetly pointed out elderly descendents of founding members sitting nearby.

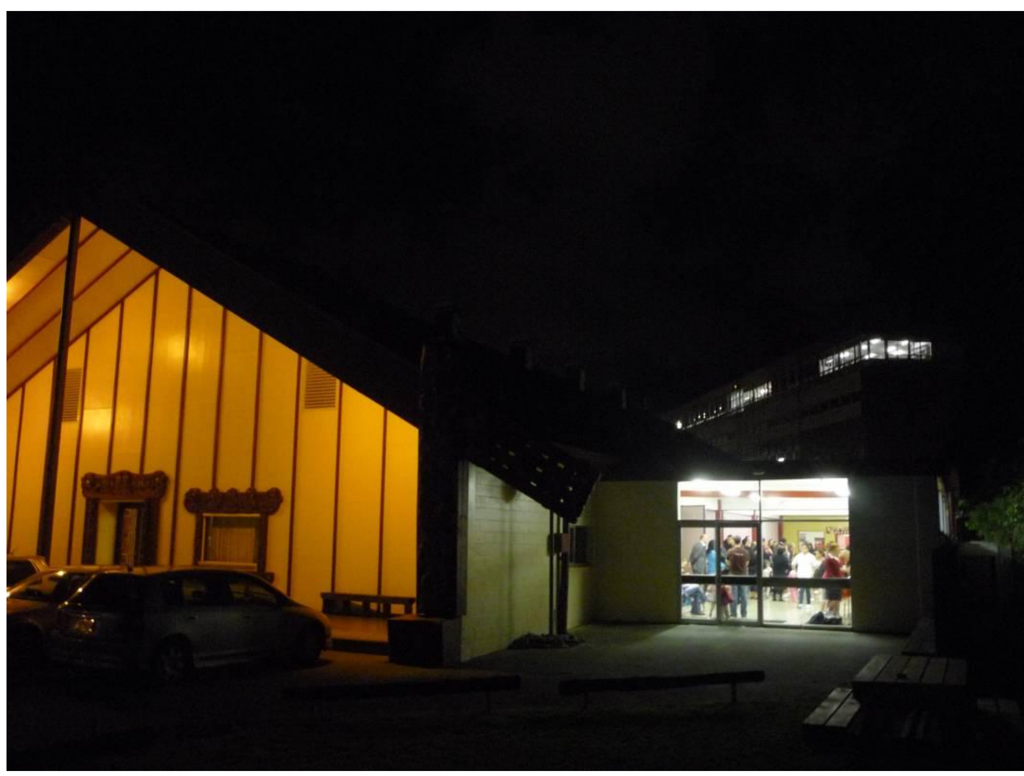

Plate 25: **Pipitea Marae**

To the left, the Pipitea Marae meeting house—Te Upoko-o-te-Ika-a-Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga; to the right, the wharekai where club practices take place. *Michael Brown*

The origins of NPYMC lie with waves of Māori urban migration back to Wellington after World War I. At noted in Chapter 3, the city had a very small Māori population: the 1926 census records only 216 Māori out of a total population of 88,920; by 1936, this had increased to 337. Most had come to work in Wellington from other areas, the city having little tangata whenua (people of the land) presence and no marae at this time, a situation that requires some preliminary explanation.

The earliest iwi living around Wellington Harbour include Ngāi Tara, who named the harbour, Te Whanganui-ā-Tara, “The Great Harbour of Tara”, after their eponymous ancestor. In the early nineteenth-century, invading tribes from the north, including Te Āti Awa and their allies Ngāti Toa, began to occupy the area and Te Āti Awa (originally from Taranaki) became the most populous tangata whenua (Anderson and Pickens 1996). Just before British colonisation commenced in 1840, Te Āti Awa leaders were pressured to sell much of their land—through a deed later found to be invalid—and many subsequently moved back to Taranaki (Waitangi Tribunal 2003). By 1881, only thirty-seven inhabitants remained at pā (villages) in Wellington, but these sites were soon abandoned, with only a small community at Waiwhetu in the Hutt Valley persisting into the twentieth century (Love 2006).

By the 1930s, church and welfare groups realised that younger Māori migrants to Wellington needed their own place to meet and sustain a Māori identity and, in 1937, Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club was formally established with support from influential figures like Lady Miria Pomare (1877-1971). Sir Apirana Ngata (1874-1950), politician, scholar and composer, bestowed the name “Ngāti Pōneke” on the club, using an old Māori transliteration of Port Nicholson (Wellington Harbour). This name became a pan-tribal designation that represented a Māori identity available to all newcomers to Wellington.

In *The Silent Migration*, an oral history of the club’s first decade, early members recall how Ngāti Pōneke, with its weekly practices and social events, provided a friendly environment in a city where few Māori faces were seen on the streets (Grace et al. 2001). Initially tutored by composer and senior civil servant Kingi Tahiwi (1883-1948), the club was soon giving concerts around Wellington and further afield (see DVD2:1.23-2.13). Over one thousand were staged during World War II alone (Grace et al. 2001:230). Practices were first held in theatres and dance studios, but in 1944 Prime Minister Peter Fraser gifted NPYMC ongoing use of an inner-city hall in recognition of their contributions.

The creation of Ngāti Pōneke can also be seen as part of wider efforts by Sir Apirana Ngata and others to revitalise Māori culture in the early-twentieth century (Walker 1990:191-194). They were concerned that colonialism was leading to Māori people

being swiftly assimilated into the majority culture, a process hastened by ongoing loss of land, erosion of tribal authority, and a government ban on Māori language use in schools. NPYMC, then, was partly intended to ensure cultural transmission to younger generations living away from their tribal bases. Another contemporaneous innovation was the waiata-ā-ringa genre, that often involved the borrowing of tunes from popular songs. As Ngoi Pewhairangi notes of her aunt Tuini Ngawai's work: "the use of these tunes proved popular with the younger generation and in this regard, Tuini's songs acted as an agent for the preservation of Māori Language and Culture (1985:vi). Later in this chapter, it will be suggested that guitar accompaniment was another—less recognised—advance in the struggle for cultural survival.

During the post-WWII urban migration period, clubs similar to NPYMC were established around New Zealand to create support communities and maintain cultural continuities. The latter remained a vital task: use of the Māori language, for example, was still declining, such that by the mid-1970s less than eighteen percent of Māori people were fluent speakers (Belich 2001:480). The Māori population of the greater Wellington area soared during the 1950s-1960s—compare the rate of general vs. Māori population increase (Figures 2, 7)—and Ngāti Pōneke was soon joined by new cultural groups, including Wellington Anglican Māori Club and Te Kahui Rangatahi. Their overall importance is highlighted by the fact that, in 1970, one in ten adult Māori Wellingtonians belonged to such an organisation (Butterworth 1970:62). In 1972, Māori cultural performance entered a new era with the establishment of a platform for biennial national competitions: the New Zealand Polynesian Festival.

In the twenty-first century, Ngāti Pōneke is a Wellington institution. The club was instrumental in raising money for the building of Pipitea Marae close to an original pā site, where it has been based since 1980. Much of Ngāti Pōneke's ongoing strength lies in its strong whānau connections. People have told me of being "brought up in the club" like their own children and grandchildren; there are now third- and fourth-generation members. At one meeting I attended, much importance was placed on maintaining whanaungatanga: a Māori concept connected with the mutual support created through whānau/marae relationships (Mead 2003:28-29). Pride is also naturally taken in being one of the oldest kapa haka groups in New Zealand. The club has around 150-170 current members, who represent a larger whānau network, with those I have come to

know including public servants, teachers, students, salespeople, librarians, prison guards, and labourers.

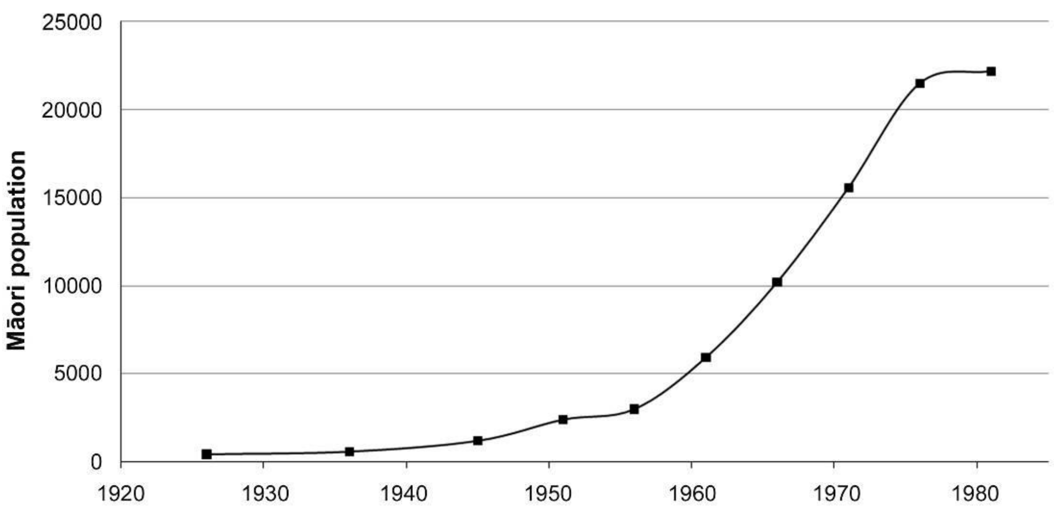

Figure 7: **Māori population of Wellington urban areas 1926-1981**

This chart combines figures across the greater Wellington area (Wellington, Hutt Valley, Porirua) from the ten national censuses held between 1926 and 1981.

NPYMC has a special policy of welcoming all comers and, partly due to the transient nature of the Wellington workforce, several thousand people have passed through its ranks over the years. Membership is not restricted to Māori people; many child and adult members have mixed Māori-Pākehā family backgrounds. Such factors undoubtedly facilitated my research, as did the fact that English is mainly spoken on club nights. Nonetheless, as a Pākehā, to join Ngāti Pōneke was to enter a kind of Māori world of which I had little previous experience.

At seven o'clock on the night of my first visit, club practice drew to a close. Everybody stood for a hīmene (hymn) and karakia (prayer), then the children's supper was served. At this point, Bill Nathan introduced me to Michael Priest, Ngāti Pōneke's senior guitarist (see Plate 26). After learning I played guitar already, he said: "Why didn't you say so? Make sure you bring your guitar along next time". Immediate participation was going to be the best way to understand kapa haka accompaniment. Thus, over the next six months I attended weekly junior practices and eventually joined the club. In September 2009, senior-team practices began in preparation for the March 2010

competitions and I was invited to join the troupe. My formal fieldwork was concluded after the competitions (in which we placed fourth), but I kept attending club nights until June 2011. During the overall period, I performed in some twelve club concerts around Wellington.

Plate 26: **Michael Priest**

Michael Priest, born in 1956, currently works as a teacher aide. A member of NPYMC since 1966, he has performed for many concerts and competitions over the years, taking up the guitarist role in the mid-1990s. *Michael Brown*

Overview of kapa haka

"Kapa haka" is an umbrella term currently applied to the Māori performing arts, referring to "haka", which can be a generic term for Māori dances, performed by groups arranged into "kapa", rows or ranks (Pettersen 2007:42). Kapa haka is part a long history of Māori cultural performance extending back through concert parties and tourist presentations, to traditional practices (Kaiwai and Zemke-White 2004:149-151). The term itself seems to have taken hold in the 1980s,[2] around the same time the "performing arts" paradigm was formally enshrined with the 1986 renaming of national competitions as the Aotearoa Māori Festival of Arts (Rollo 2007:101). This section gives a brief, selective overview of this complex performance tradition to establish a basic context for the discussion about guitar playing to follow.

At a practical level, kapa haka is undertaken in the context of organised groups (rōpu). These can be divided into two main types: those with an iwi/tribal rural base and those

[2] The term "kapa haka" was apparently insufficiently widespread in the 1980s to be included in either Ryan (1997) or Orsman (1997).

with a pan-tribal urban base (Te Manaaroha Rollo, interview). Many schools, universities, and other organisations also maintain groups. Some rōpu may derive income from performing, but kapa haka generally has an amateur ethos. In the mid-1970s, an estimated 300 Māori cultural clubs were operating in New Zealand (Metge 1976:183) and today there are probably many more.

Kapa haka, Michael Priest explained to me, involves two main kinds of performance. First, there is "concert work", essentially entertainment for an audience. During the 2009-2011 period, Ngāti Pōneke gave many such concerts at conferences, sports championships, civic festivals, and hui. Troupes were constituted from available club members and well-known material was usually performed that required no prior rehearsal. The second kind of kapa haka performance is "competition work", where groups develop a bracket of around twenty-five minutes to be marked by judges at a special festival. Regional kapa haka competitions are held biennially and the various winning teams compete the following year at the national festival, now known as Te Matatini. This is the largest Māori cultural event held in New Zealand and may attract an audience of 30,000 or more (Mazer 2011:43). Competition work involves months of preparation and has become a major focus in kapa haka.

The traditional Māori song, chant, and dance practices upon which kapa haka is based are associated with various rituals and tasks, as well as the transmission of tribal knowledge and entertainment (McLean 1996). In particular, kapa haka can be regarded as a staged continuity of certain performed elements of the pōwhiri or the "rituals of encounter" which are enacted when groups are formally welcomed onto marae: a process of calls, challenges, greetings, speeches, traditional performances, and hongi (pressing of noses) (Salmond 1976). Of the five main kapa haka disciplines listed below, the first two would feature at many or most pōwhiri:

Mōteatea	Traditional poetic songs or chants such as pātere[3]
Haka	Traditional posture dances with shouted accompaniment, mostly performed by men[4]
Poi	Dances utilising poi, small light balls on a string, with sung or chanted accompaniment, generally performed by women[5]

[3] See McRae and Jacob 2011.
[4] See Kāretu 1993.

Waiata-ā-ringa Danced songs with expressive hand and arm actions (ringa)[6]

Waiata-tira Choral items or hīmene[7]

Other traditional arts used at pōwhiri and also incorporated into kapa haka include karanga (welcoming calls), whaikōrero (oratory), and mau rākau (martial arts). In recent decades there has been revived interest in taonga pūoro (traditional musical instruments), with instruments like the pūtātara (conch trumpet) being increasingly used in kapa haka (Flintoff 2004).

Pōwhiri rituals attest to the prevalence of warfare in earlier periods of Māori history and the caution taken when groups from different iwi encountered each other. Likewise, kapa haka rōpū might themselves be conceived as taua (mobile war parties), an impression reinforced by the wielding of weapons, the frontal physicality of haka, and the "occupation" of the stage which is formalised in two special competition disciplines: whakaeke (entry item) and whakawātea (exit item).

Yet kapa haka performance is more than a stylised re-enactment of pōwhiri. As Sharon Mazer notes, "It is theatricalised, performed... facing an audience... a proscenium–arched construct modelled on the European stage" (2011:45). As a stage presentation comprising many genres, kapa haka thus carries on the concert-party format which was widely adopted by Māori in the 1920s-1930s. Furthermore, although the underlying message of items may be serious, poi and waiata-ā-ringa create thrilling and entertaining displays. At Ngāti Pōneke, tutors always reminded us before concerts to enjoy ourselves onstage and smile at the audience—except where this was inappropriate, as in haka.

Kapa haka groups tend to include a roughly equal number of male and female performers (kaihaka). Depending on the occasion, modern uniforms or traditional kākahu (clothing) may be worn (cf. Shennan 1984:48-49). A classic onstage arrangement is in parallel rows facing the audience, with women often filed in two rows in front and men in two rows behind. Stage choreography is another strong element, especially in competition whakaeke and whakawātea, where medleys of various genres

[5] See Huata 2000; Paringatai 2004; for a 1930s poi, see DVD1.
[6] See Shennan 1984; for two 1940s waiata-ā-ringa, see DVD2.
[7] I have not traced any published studies of waiata-tira, but see McLean 1996:276-308.

climax in dramatic group tableaux. Groups tend to have two leaders or kaea—more specifically kaitātaki tāne (male leader) and kaitātaki wahine (female leader)—who direct items and marshal the group (Matthews and Paringatai 2004:111). They also move more independently onstage and wear different kākahu.

Kapa haka groups derive their repertoire from various sources. In *The Silent Migration*, one Ngāti Pōneke member recalls how in the early years "a lot of the songs were traditional… [and] new people... brought songs from their districts with them" (Grace et al. 2001:81). Some NPYMC items I learned were localised versions of classic Māori songs that would be known throughout New Zealand; others were specifically associated with the club. Competitions, Michael Priest explained, provide much stimulus for new compositions and reworked material:

> ***Michael Priest:*** In competition work you're singing to a certain kaupapa [theme]. You may start on... people that have passed away in the group... life stories... things that have happened within New Zealand, like the Land March[8]... they compose certain action songs... poi... mōteatea, around those situations... topics of the day, topics of yesteryear. [B]

Borrowing of popular tunes for new items remains common, but original composition is also encouraged for competitions (Pettersen 2007:63-64). Nonetheless, tunes tend to be regarded as vehicles for the all-important kupu (words) and message of an item (cf. Pewhairangi 1985:xxiv). Such logocentricism is also encoded in the structures of traditional Māori music: the rhythms of haka and waiata, for instance, often follow textual phrasing rather than conforming to regular meter (McLean 1996:250-251). This quality is also carried over into some contemporary waiata-ā-ringa and poi.

Three traditional concepts are used to evaluate kapa haka performances: ihi, wehi, and wana. These together, help identify a good performance: "*ihi* is often defined as a combination of authority, charisma, essential force, excitement, pride, nobility, and awesomeness" manifest in the performers; "*wehi* is the response of awe to the manifestation of *ihi* in the performer or performance"; and "*wana* is a thrilling feeling... the aura surrounding the performance" (Matthews and Paringatai 2004:114). All three converge in an excellent kapa haka performance.

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[8] The Māori Land March was a 1975 protest against the alienation of Māori land (Walker 1990:212-215).

Kapa haka, then, presents a panoply of Māori culture: traditional ritual and modern choreography converge; older themes and contemporary topics illuminate each other; singing is integrated with dance, poi, choreography, oratory, and martial arts; and material culture is represented in clothing, weaponry, and adornments. Another ubiquitous element in contemporary kapa haka—and widespread since the late-1940s—is guitar accompaniment in the Māori strumming style (Armstrong 1959, 1986:57; Rikihana 1992:2; Katene 1991:5, 1998:937; Ngata and Armstrong 2002 [1960]:17; Paringatai 2004:122; Mazer 2011:53 fn23). Televised broadcasts of the 2009 Te Matatini festival at Tauranga showed groups from around New Zealand all using strummed guitar accompaniment. Video recordings of previous festivals going back to the 1980s (Michael Priest collection), together with broadcasts of similar material that currently screen most weeknights on the Māori Television network, also confirm the instrument's widespread usage. This element of kapa haka, however, as already mentioned in Chapter 6, has seldom been discussed at any length in scholarly studies. The guitar is also little covered in public discourses. In 2008, for instance, the Māori Television network screened a series exploring many aspects of kapa haka, *Whare Tapere*, but guitars were briefly mentioned only once, in an episode devoted to taonga pūoro (there was no episode about guitars). Practitioners I talked to from the Wellington region—and others from further afield—have also told me that, in their experience, guitars are not a major kapa haka topic.

Basic functions of guitar accompaniment

Despite the apparent dearth of public discourse about guitar accompaniment, Michael Priest and other practitioners in the Wellington region I talked with considered it an essential feature. While not obligatory, kapa haka seemed virtually inconceivable to many of them without guitars. "My generation and the generations after me probably couldn't fathom kapa haka without a guitar", one person told me ("Heni", interview). What makes it so important?

My fieldwork with Ngāti Pōneke revealed that guitar accompaniment was mainly used in three disciplines: waiata-ā-ringa, poi, and waiata-tira; along with whakaeke and whakawātea in competitions. A similar pattern can be observed in televised kapa haka

performances. Some of the guitar's basic functions are clearly evident in the introductory sequences for these kinds of items. A WWII-era Ngāti Pōneke item that I learned, for instance, 'Haere mai rā', features an opening typical of older waiata-ā-ringa (cf. Ngata and Armstrong 2002 [1960]:34-37). It begins with the group standing ready in their rows before being given a series of preparatory actions:

1. The kaea commands "hope" (hands on hips)
2. The kaihaka place hands on hips
3. If not done briskly enough, the kaea may command "kei raro" (hands down), then repeat
4. The guitarist strums the tonic or first chord for the item
5. The kaea or a kaihaka sings the first line to remind the group of the melody
6. The kaea calls "ringa whiua" (swing the arms)

Three things then occur virtually simultaneously—the kaea begins counting in the group "tahi... rua... toru... whā" (one, two, three, four); the performers commence their takahia (stamping the right foot); and the guitarist plays a sequence of introductory chords—which lead the group into the main singing and actions. For a depiction of the opening sequence, see Figure 8 (also CD12).

Such highly-structured openings reflect the practical challenge of synchronising the dancing and singing of up to forty individuals (or more), who will be facing the audience and have little eye contact with each other. The guitar's usefulness first becomes apparent with the sounding of the initial guitar chord, described at Ngāti Pōneke as "giving the note", which allows the kaea to correctly pitch their demonstration of the opening melodic phrase (cf. Anon. 2005:21).[9] The chord also supplies a range of other notes which may help performers seek their own register or harmony. "Playing those full chords", Ray Isaacs observed, "we can hear the different notes and the individual [can lock] onto a note that he or she can sing to" (interview).

[9] The concept of "the note" given by the guitar can be compared with the "tonic or tonal centre" of traditional waiata known as the "oro" (McLean 1996:235-236). On one occasion at Ngāti Pōneke, a kaea signalled the initial guitar strum with the command "orotahi", which might be translated as "main note".

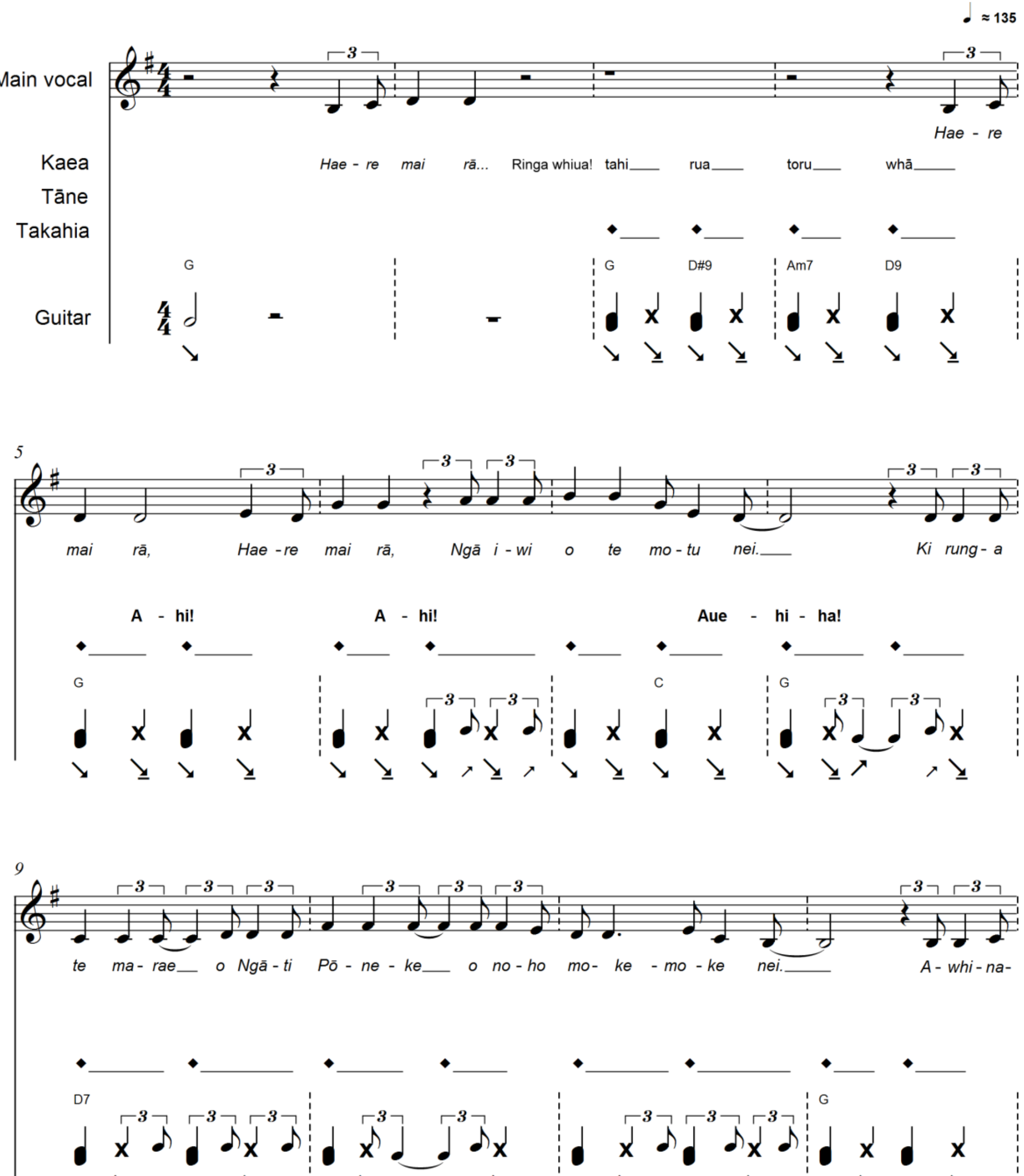


Figure 8: **'Haere mai rā' opening**

Main vocal and guitar transcribed from Michael Priest (interview A), with other elements added as per a standard Ngāti Pōneke performance. The "kaea" (leader) part shows the demonstration melody (italics), and commands and counting-in (non-italics). The "tāne" (men's) part shows chanted interjections; the symbol "◆" indicates the group's "takahia" (foot stamp). The first two measures would not be strictly timed.

The guitar introduction then helps guide the group into the item in two ways. First, as one person pointed out to me, the chords "provide a cadence for the group" (Lawrence

Wharerau, pers. comm. 3/8/2009), allowing people to "catch onto the notes" of the melody—envisaging its contour and intervals—much like an organ part might guide a church congregation into a hymn by playing the final cadence. Indeed, several Ngāti Pōneke items began with a final line or couplet being sung before the opening verse (e.g., 'Ka noho au', CD13). Other items incorporated a few strums of a dominant seventh before resolving to the tonic (e.g., see Figure 9). The guitar also establishes a strong rhythm and sets the tempo. By the time the kaea reaches "whā", the group should be a coordinated whole.

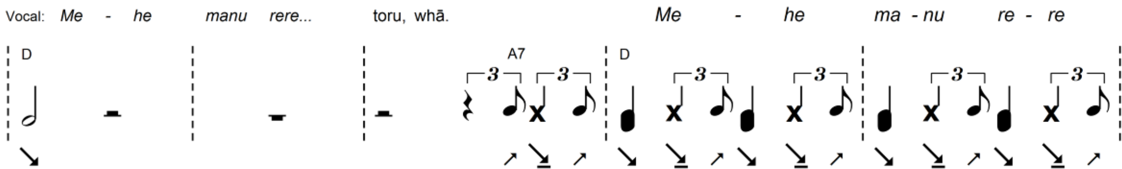


Figure 9: **'Me he manu rere' opening**

As learned by the writer at Ngāti Pōneke

Guitar accompaniment continues to serve an essential role throughout each item by maintaining group synchronisation: anchoring "the note" so that group singing will not droop, supplying harmonic changes, and keeping the beat. Significantly, the three genres where guitar accompaniment is mainly used, as identified above, tend to feature Western diatonic melody, so that here the guitar has a comprehensive contribution to make. Mōteatea, on the other hand, generally use non-diatonic traditional scales (McLean 1996:235-239), while haka feature shouted (unpitched) accompaniment. Because no harmonic guidance is required in such items and rhythm can be maintained in other ways (such as takahia), strummed guitar backing is unnecessary. Mōteatea and haka are also valued as traditional disciplines and accompaniment would thus add an inappropriate Western element.[10]

The guitar's role is highlighted by aspects of kapa haka performance practice, too. In order to function as a synchronising tool, the guitar must be audible to most of the group. A standard guitarist positioning, therefore, with Ngāti Pōneke and many other groups, is behind the back row from where the sound is projected forward to the whole

[10] These matters are not entirely clear-cut, however, given that guitar accompaniment can be used for chanted poi (e.g., 'Huai huai' on St. Joseph's Maori Girls College Choir and Concert Party 1973).

group. But given that singing by thirty or forty seasoned kaihaka can be very loud and rows of bodies have a muffling effect, most groups perform with several guitarists (also an “insurance policy” if strings are broken). Competitions generally allow for two guitarists per group, but more might be added for concert work. Michael Priest and other practitioners I interviewed also noted that large, steel-stringed acoustic guitars tend to be used for their superior volume. Nonetheless, the most regular request made of me at Ngāti Pōneke was “play louder”. As Michael Priest observed, kapa haka accompaniment requires “a firm strum... you’ve got to project your sound”. He and most other guitarists I talked with recommended using guitar picks to bolster volume and save fingernails being pounded away.

The need for audibility also helps explain the value of the Māori guitar strumming style in kapa haka. As at a noisy party, I observed the style’s full chords and percussive “ensemble” had the uncanny capability of piercing through loud singing. Moreover, its technical simplicity ensures confidence when, as one person put it, you have to “bash [the guitar] as hard as you can” (Ray Isaacs, interview). In fact, in my experience, the style acquires a certain purity in kapa haka. Single note licks or finger strumming would generally be completely lost. The most basic components of the Māori guitar strumming style, though, allow one or two guitars to be aurally located by kaihaka in the dense soundscape being created.

Learning and competition training

Learning and practising occupy much time in kapa haka, far more than actually performing at concerts or competitions. Every week at Ngāti Pōneke junior practices, we rehearsed well-known items and worked on new material, with the group splitting up halfway through for boys and girls to receive specialist instruction in haka and poi respectively. The senior group’s build-up for competitions, meanwhile, consisted of hundreds of hours of preparation for a single twenty-five minute performance. Other researchers describe very similar situations (Pettersen 2007:79; Mazer 2011:46). This section describes my experience of how guitar accompaniment was learned and practised, along with some supplementary points garnered in interviews.

Learning

For me, learning kapa haka guitar accompaniment began immediately upon arriving guitar in hand for my second Ngāti Pōneke junior-team practice. Michael beckoned me over and we tuned our instruments to match. After an initial hymn and karakia, he indicated that I should stand behind the group with him. Throughout the practice, I followed his lead, strumming along quietly, trying to interpret his left-handed fingering. This imitative learning continued over subsequent months, as I slowly absorbed the strums, chords, and cues for items. No chord charts or scores were ever used (see Plate 27).

Plate 27: **Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club junior-team practice**
Michael Brown

How typical was my participatory induction into the kapa haka guitarist role? At Ngāti Pōneke, it seemed fairly standard practice. According to Bill Nathan, there has never been any formalised "apprenticeship" system during his fifty years with the club:

Bill Nathan (Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Tahu): No formal training of any sort... [just] someone picking up the strum, the rhythm and the quality of guitar playing... very much a

> "follow me"-type thing. Or somebody telling him to follow the guitarist: "you'll pick it up and away you go"... self-learning on the spot. [A]

Parents, grandparents, and other members sometimes joined in with spare club instruments or brought their own along, too, generally following Michael's lead. All were competent in playing the instrument already: there was no training in guitar rudiments at NPYMC practices.

In many ways, an imitative "self-learning on the spot" process characterised kapa haka instruction at the club more generally. Tutors, for instance, performed in front of the group during run-throughs as a visual reference. Song melodies were also learned aurally, although large sheets with kupu (words) were pinned on the wall as a practice aid. But certain aspects marked out learning guitar accompaniment.

It involved none of the specialist instruction given with disciplines like haka and poi, for example, or explanation (whakamārama) of kupu or relevant Māori concepts. There seemed to be no te reo Māori terms for strums, chords, or techniques. Nor was my playing openly monitored or scrutinised. Precise duplication of Michael's strum was not really expected. The main expectation was to stay in tune, play correct chord changes, and maintain the beat, but otherwise one could intuitively shape details like the finer structure of the strum pattern and use of ornaments for oneself. The absence of scores also enabled different chord voicings and passing chords to be added.

There were some some vernacular liberties available with playing the strumming style, then, when learning guitar accompaniment at junior practices. Club nights themselves had a fairly relaxed atmosphere and a few experiments, accidents, and fumbles were going to be tolerated. But as I progressed, the need for discipline became increasingly obvious. The main purpose of practices was learning and honing Māori performing arts skills: not mucking around. This became obvious when I found myself sole guitarist one evening. From the first, it was evident that my knowledge of introductions was still hazy and, without Michael leading the way, my lone guitar sounded off key, then too quiet, then too harsh. I became conscious of the whole group listening to and depending on me. The experience resolved me to tighten up my playing.

Another interesting aspect of Ngāti Pōneke junior practices was that only adults played guitar (except for mucking round beforehand and afterwards). Given the wide age-range of the juniors and the need to work with the tutors, this was probably the most efficient arrangement. Yet I also noticed that no children were being trained up as guitarists. This was not necessarily representative—school and college group performances I have seen can feature young accompanists—but I also gained the sense that guitar accompanist might be a role that one usually took on at a later stage. "You don't join a kapa haka group to become the guitarist", one experienced practitioner told me ("David", interview). Playing accompaniment might preclude learning disciplines like haka or poi, and one could become "stuck" with the guitar (cf. Anon. 2005:21). Michael Priest, for his part, spent thirty years performing "in the rows" before becoming an accompanist in his forties as a less physically-taxing way to stay involved. Furthermore, fieldwork, interviews, and televised broadcasts gave the impression that kapa haka guitarists are generally male (although by no means exclusively). Some possible reasons for this are discussed below.

Competition training

Initial insights gleaned from junior-team practices were confirmed by my competition training experiences. When senior practices began in September 2009, we rehearsed older material and went over possibilities for the bracket. Again, matters relating to kupu, pronunciation of te reo Māori, accuracy of melody and rhythm, and poi and haka technique were discussed, but guitar accompaniment drew very infrequent comment (usually concerning tempo and the need for me to "play harder"). This lack of close scrutiny, coupled with an absence of scores, again created a slender margin to keep shaping strumming parts in the ways discussed above (i.e. the strum pattern detailing, ornaments, chord voicings, etc.). As Michael Priest noted:

> ***Michael Priest:*** If it's a real bum note the team will tell you, but we don't go into practices saying, "This is how you play the song the whole way through, with those exact chords". You play to how you've been taught and how you do it yourself. [A]

Competition training involved an exponential increase in discipline, however, as much higher stakes were involved than playing for junior practices: Ngāti Pōneke would be competing against several expert teams before a large audience to secure a slot at Te

Matatini 2011. Within the group circle of the Ngāti Pōneke team, too, there was a compelling desire to uphold the club's reputation and demonstrate our hard work with a polished display.

In early-2010, we entered a heavy schedule of evening practices and noho (weekend stayovers) at Pipitea Marae, items being rehearsed repeatedly from early morning until late at night. "Anō" (again) was a constant command. By now, guitar parts had been more or less finalised, so items could be practised efficiently and choreography trialled. We had to be "one step ahead of the group", Michael noted. Understandably, the rigours of competition training can be trying for kapa haka guitarists. Many people I talked with half-jokingly complained about being ordered around, having to be "on call", and how guitar slip-ups drew "looks" from the group—such mistakes being far more conspicuous than those by kaihaka in the rows who forget a line or action. But the relentless practising sharpened up my playing—I focused on clearly sounding every strummed chord, internalising the required tempos, and keeping strict rhythm—to a level commensurate with the group. Consistency became crucial in the final week, so as to avoid creating deviations that might distract others and waste time. Thus, while guitar parts were initially learned and shaped with vernacular latitude, the accompaniment eventually became formalised into set patterns.

While the Māori guitar strumming style retained its vernacular basis when used at Ngāti Pōneke, then, the rehearsal process saw the vernacular steadily subsumed by other imperatives. Even if the specific ingredients of strummed accompaniments were self-shaped and unconstrained by scores (distinguishing it from highly-reified replicas of the vernacular, like conservatory-taught American "town band music": see Caswell and Smith 2000), the expectations raised by competitive goals eventually precluded an informal approach. Through their extension into the competition arena, then, particular products of the vernacular (i.e. the strum pattern for an item) were increasingly honed and refined.

Nonetheless, the "indescribable vernacular flavour" (Cicero 1971:147) of the strumming idiolect of a guitarist like Michael Priest was retained. This was confirmed by a phenomenon that became apparent during training and was mentioned by interviewees and others I spoke with: that kapa haka groups may become accustomed to or even

"dependent" upon particular guitarists. Bill Nathan recalled the occasional difficulty Ngāti Pōneke had using temporary replacements: however experienced they were and even if they already knew certain items, "things didn't quite go right" without a rapport built up over years (interview B). And understandably so, given the hundreds of hours of practising and performing, during which customised accompaniments become interwoven with standardisation of performance protocols and integrated with the group's intuitive grasp of a complex weave of singing and chanting, takahia and body percussion, and poi and dance gestures. Just as certain peoples' voices conferred distinctiveness on a tramping singsong (see Chapter 4), then, a guitarist's familiar performances nuances—which may be difficult for outsiders to perceive—become marks of shared identity. They are part of a group "making our own" process by which the guitarist becomes "ours".

In turn, learning and competition training at Ngāti Pōneke taught me that a guitarist may be influenced by their group, favouring certain chords to suit characteristic vocal blends or even retuning instruments to a comfortable centre of pitch. "Many groups don't tune to concert pitch", Ray Isaacs confirmed. "It's just something locked in their ear... [so] the guitar will never change from this key" (interview). There may also be stylistic transmission between different generations of club guitarists. Michael Priest, for example, noted that predecessors had influenced his own style:

> ***Michael Priest:*** When I first started [in 1966] Don Mananui was our main guitarist... you could hear every note and every chord, everything. That came out in the group. After Don had gone, there was... Tommy Ward. I loved his guitar playing... a very soft approach but... you could hear every chord change... beautiful, very clear.... Your first visions of a guitarist are the first ones you see basically... Mr. Mananui was sort of like an idol... "Wow, I'd like to play like that!".... With Tommy Ward, it was the same thing.... [I wanted to] have a bit of both. Then bring in my own... I think anybody playing guitar has their own style. [A]

These comments also reveal Michael's aesthetic appreciation of his predecessors' styles, with clarity and full intonation being admired musical qualities. Such personal influences comprise another facet of the processes by which strumming idiolects are formed. Certainly, for my own playing, I took Michael's strumming as a model of what the group was most comfortable with, and for its clarity, economy, and beauty.

People I talked with also noted that other kapa haka groups had recognisable guitar styles, which has also been borne out to some extent by my own observations. One person told me that “the St. Jo’s strum”, for example, “with an extra roll at the end”, has been passed down among students at St. Joseph’s Māori Girls College in Napier (Aroha Harris, pers. comm. 5/9/2009). Others mentioned the innovative guitar work of Te Waka Huia, an Auckland group who have won Te Matatini many times. Yet some interviewees also considered that, ultimately, it would be difficult to identify the rōpū, whānau, iwi, or regional background of an unknown guitarist purely from their strumming. This contrasted with the recognition that they felt would arise from variation in takahia technique, stance, vocal style, and repertoire. Nonetheless, documentation of the strumming styles of groups in other parts of New Zealand, along with insider commentary of what is perceived as aesthetically “good” or “pleasing” about it, could prove another fruitful avenue for future research.

Kapa haka strums

A major focus of my kapa haka guitar training at Ngāti Pōneke was learning “the strum” for each item. “Every song’s different”, Michael Priest told me: “You may have a couple that sound similar, but you’ve got different strums for them” (interview A). Such an emphasis on specificity contrasted with notions of all-purpose party patterns like the *jingajik*. This section discusses a few ways in which the Māori strumming style was applied as a kapa haka accompaniment at Ngāti Pōneke, along with a few more general observations. A comprehensive investigation of such matters (along with other aspects not covered here, e.g., chords, composition processes) is beyond the scope of the present study and would benefit from research. Overall, however, the section shows that the Māori strumming style is a flexible, varied, and carefully-modulated component of kapa haka performance; and a vehicle of personal expression for guitarists.

Historical development

There was consistent recognition among accompanists I talked with that strums are part of the ongoing historical evolution of kapa haka generally (cf. Anon. 2005:23). Indeed, as many older items are still performed in clubs like Ngāti Pōneke, this development

remains embedded in the active repertoire. Songs from the World War II and earlier, Michael Priest observed, tend to use "just the straight *jing jak jing jak*, keep the beat, [or] three-four, *jing jink jink*":

Michael Priest: But as time has progressed you get different styles, different beats. That's all to do with the songs that were composed later on... a gradual progression. [...] You see a lot of the triple strums [now], real fast... and that's all because of how kapa haka's going nowadays. A lot of the action songs and poi dances are very up tempo compositions. It just doesn't help to have that *jing jik*. [B, A]

Commercial LP recordings of Māori cultural groups suggest that compound-time strums are one family of strumming patterns that probably only emerged in the 1960s (see Chapter 8). Patterns with an emphasis on the first eighth-note off-beat of each measure may be another later development (see Figure 10, CD14). These support a slow group sway—not unlike a black American gospel choir—which I have often observed being performed during waiata-tira items (e.g., by many groups at Te Matatini 2009). Other practitioners noted soul, R&B, reggae, and hip hop influences on contemporary kapa haka composition having inspired new strums.

Recreating and adapting strums

The process of learning strum patterns aurally, I observed at Ngāti Pōneke, also influences what is played. With no score to refer to, strums sometimes changed over time: either involuntarily in performance or through more deliberate adaptation. Involuntary change processes were evident when Michael's guiding strums subtly varied from week to week at Ngāti Pōneke junior practices. Sometimes, these variations were sustained through an entire performance or, conversely, he might lead into an item with one pattern and then add an inflection that felt better in terms of the group performance. Michael himself acknowledged that he was not sure whether he repeated exactly the same strum for some items. Strums are "never locked down", he told me, giving the guitarist "the freedom to put how you feel throughout that song" (interview A). Strums thus might be said to exhibit a kind of musical "vernacular textuality" (Atkinson 2004). A comparison between two performances by Michael of the hīmene/waiata-tira 'Wairua tapu' shows several small variations of this kind (see bars two/three in Figure 10).

When new items were introduced, a more conscious refashioning of strums might occur. In mid-2009, for example, the hīmene ‘Ka pīata te wairua’ was introduced to the junior team and Michael initially recreated a tutor’s strum, but then modified this over the next few weeks because he felt the children’s singing was dragging and a simpler, more buoyant pattern was needed. In such cases, Michael told me, he might “have a tutū” with the item at home. With new competition pieces, similarly, “you adapt your strum to... how the composer wants it played... there’s a bit of give and take” (interview A).

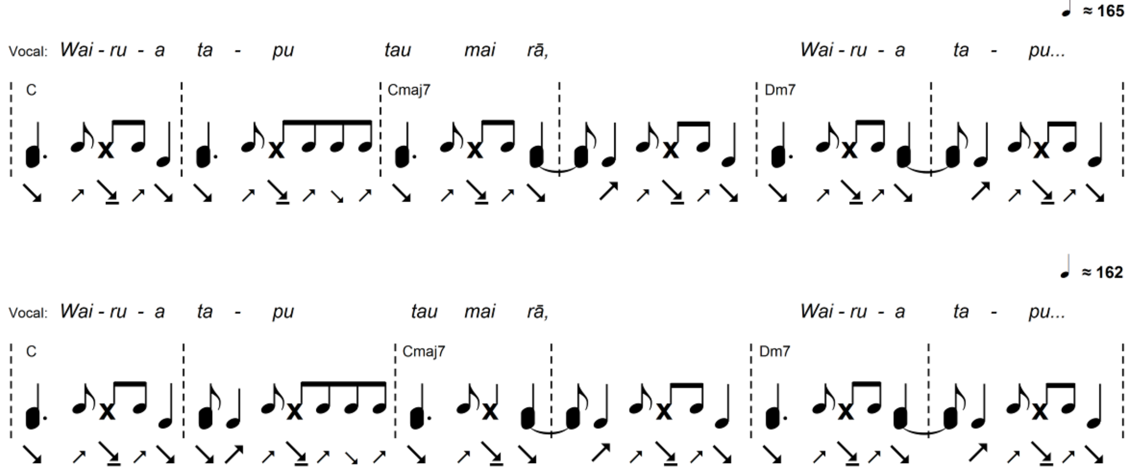


Figure 10: **‘Wairua tapu’ strums**
From Michael Priest, interviews A, B

Form and structure

The strumming accompaniments I learned were also inherently related to the forms and structures of their respective items. Waiata-ā-ringa, poi, and waiata-tira take many different forms, with Ngāti Pōneke pieces I learned including strophic, verse-chorus, and through-composed. With some, strums remained relatively constant throughout, while in others the strum changed in parallel with basic structural units like verses and choruses. The two-part strum for the waiata-ā-ringa ‘Ko wai enei’, for instance, paralleled its shift from duple to triple meter (see Figure 11). Senior competition items were the most complicated structurally. Our 2010 waiata-ā-ringa, ‘E whakamaru nei i roto i a koe’, for example, featured a slow introductory passage, two slow verses, two bridges (one slow, one fast), two up-tempo verses, an unaccompanied haka section, then

a rousing sung finale. Overall, it incorporated three main strums and different chord changes for each section.

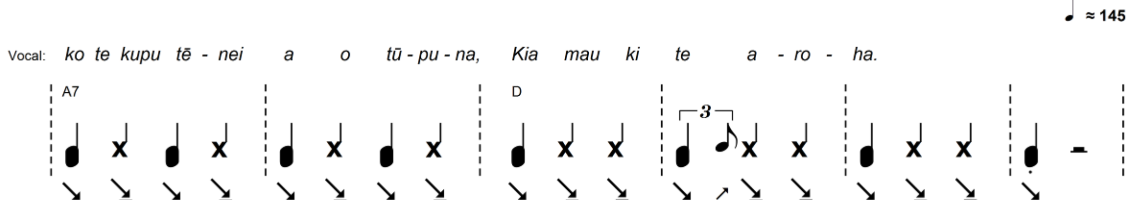


Figure 11: **'Ko wai enei' strum**

From Michael Priest, interview B

Patterns were also subtly modulated to mark structural divisions. The transcription of Michael Priest's strum for 'Haere mai rā', for example, shows a syncopated deviation from the main *jing jik* pattern that occurred in virtually every performance (bar eight in Figure 8). This rhythmic "punctuation mark" setting up the dominant seventh chord came after the second line of every "A section" in the item (which had a 32-bar AABA form).

More prominent punctuating flourishes were sometimes used to mark climaxes or structural transitions. The main vocal of the waiata-ā-ringa 'Aku mahi', for instance, gradually builds to a jubilant vocal exclamation that is immediately echoed by a staccato guitar fill (see Figure 12). Finales also provided an opportunity for guitarists to support a group crescendo with double-strumming and or a final chord drawn out with fast tremolo strumming.

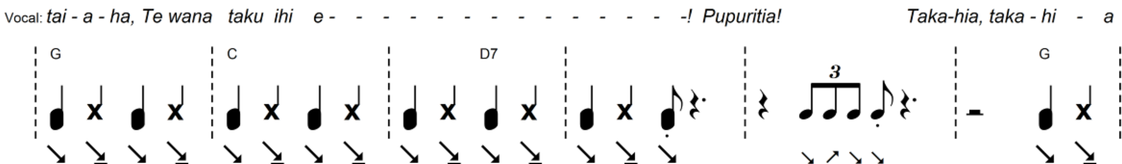


Figure 12: **'Aku mahi' strum**

As learned by the writer at Ngāti Pōneke

Ornamentation

Another characteristic feature of kapa haka accompaniment at Ngāti Pōneke—and more widely—is the spontaneous addition of ornaments: double strums, tied strums, syncopated accents, etc. This was typical of performances of the Māori strumming style generally and can be seen in many transcriptions given already. Such ornamentation may serve a group performance function in kapa haka. Some guitarists I talked with observed that they often added spontaneous fills at structural transition points that perhaps acted as cues to remind or reassure kaihaka of where they were in an item. Michael Priest noted that he might ornament a strum to try to settle a group performance, if this was wavering, or to "help it along". He also viewed fills as personal expressive flourishes. Bill Nathan noted their aesthetic contribution, too:

> ***Bill Nathan:*** It's adding something to the presentation which only the guitarist or instrument can give.... Not to intrude upon the group, but... give another note or chord which blends with the total presentation sound... to the overall beauty... those trills, those little additions would add to the total integration... not quite so much as a cue. Whilst [the group is] training and learning, it would be, but later on it becomes just an embellishment to the presentation. [A]

Strum ornamentation—in variously cueing, stimulating, or embellishing a performance—could be compared to fills that a drummer might add in a rock band. There are parallels elsewhere in kapa haka performance, too, notably the long-established practice of individual kaea or kaihaka pre-emptively calling out lines, exclamations that prompt and inspire the group, and decorate the performance (see CD12, CD13; cf. Ngata and Armstrong 2002 [1960]:17). Guitar ornamentation, then, is in keeping with some of the characteristic textural layering of kapa haka performance.

Dance movements, poi, and additive rhythm

Waiata-ā-ringa and poi items involve a complex weave of dance actions and sounds generated through these movements (e.g., swish of piupiu, slapping and bouncing of poi). Guitar accompaniment will inevitably have strong correlations with the rhythms of these components, the most obvious being the takahia. This leg action, traditionally used in haka to punctuate the beat, was carried over with a softer emphasis to waiata-ā-

ringa and also some poi (Shennan 1984:59). Although performed according to various tribal traditions, a combined group takahia can create deep thuds on the on-beat, which are effectively doubled by the sustained down-strums of many strum patterns (e.g., see Figure 8; CD12). This close functional and sonic correspondence suggests that takahia may have had a strong influence on the consolidation of the Māori strumming style. Indeed, an emphatic on-beat doubling is heard on the earliest known recording of the style, the ca.1940 version of 'Arohaina mai' (see Chapter 6).

Poi rhythms and guitar strums, in my experience, were related in various ways depending on the particular poi format (i.e. single long poi, double long, double short, etc.). Michael Priest felt that poi items demanded flexibility from a guitarist: "the poi is for the women to weave their magic... to keep their own time... and the guitarist is there to play along" (interview A). I found this was especially so with double long poi, where the circling poi motions were relatively slow and without the strictness created by takahia. Simple patterns like a *jing jik* or *jingajik* seemed better suited to long poi, perhaps because they allow greater leeway to modulate the tempo. Short poi items, by contrast, tended to feature driving strums that matched the fast, intricate poi rhythms.

Kapa haka items, as noted already, may also feature vocal rhythms that in terms of Western meter seem irregular, displaying what Mervyn McLean describes as "additive rhythm" (1996:250-251). Successive lines may be of different lengths and rhythmic stresses may sound unpredictable to the unaccustomed ear. Strumming patterns I learned at Ngāti Pōneke accommodated such rhythms in various ways. Several faster items with additive rhythmic elements, for instance, used short patterns of only a single on-beat and off-beat. The guitar part thus became a continuous ribbon of small units that accommodates lines of varying lengths and non-regular emphases (e.g., see 'Ka noho au', CD13). Interestingly, a similar combination features in some traditional poi, where a "tock tick" poi rhythm—similar to a *jing jik* strum—provides a steady 2/4 accompaniment beneath additive vocal rhythms (e.g., see McLean and Orbell 2004:18), thus pointing to another way by which traditional Māori elements may have encouraged the widespread adoption of the strumming style. Additive rhythms in NPYMC items were also be accommodated through a more subtle detailing. In the strum for the poi 'He taonga nui te Reo', for example, two "extra" beats are inserted at one point to match the additive vocal rhythm (see Figure 13).

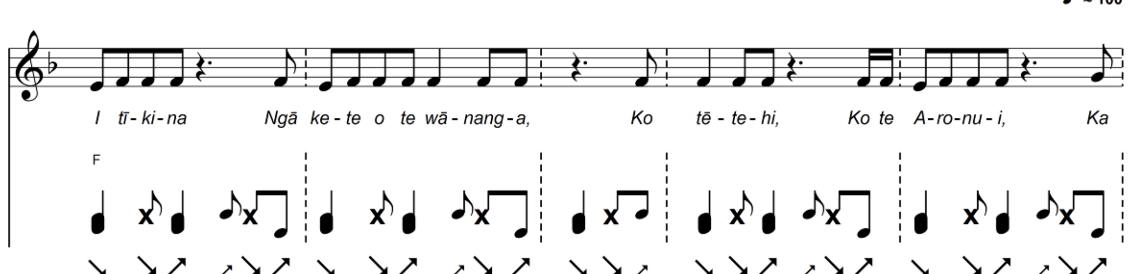


Figure 13: **'He taonga nui te reo' strum**

From Michael Priest, recorded 19/11/2009

The kapa haka guitarist onstage

Kapa haka ropū create a strongly-unified impression onstage through their uniform kākahu, synchronised performance style, and integrated choreography. Certain individuals stand out, though, particularly kaea and manu ngangahu: "armed women who flank the *matua* [main body] to protect the flank of the group and urge the performers on" (Matthews and Paringatai 2004:111; see DVD2:0.41-1.12). Guitarists also have their own—less prominent—specialist presence. This section discusses the various roles held and contributions made by guitarists onstage, their characteristic positioning, and consideration in competitions. Again, my data mostly derives from fieldwork in the Wellington region with NPYMC, but video recordings and other evidence (such as national competition regulations) allow a few observations about national kapa haka practice to be made. Overall, I suggest this evidence shows that guitarists are integrated into groups in ways complementary with kapa haka performance values. The section concludes by noting how this integration helps explain the ongoing preference for guitar accompaniment since the late-1940s.

Roles and contributions

Most kapa haka practitioners I spoke with referred to kapa haka accompanists simply as "guitarists". Although I occasionally heard the terms "kairakuraku" and "kaiwhakatangi

rakuraku" used,[11] there doesn't seem to be a single formal Māori title per se, as with kaea or manu ngangahu; nor have I traced any such term in articles or books about Māori cultural performance (where terms like "guitarist" or "accompanist" are usual). This perhaps reflects guitarists' largely functional role as well as a lack of precedents in older Māori traditions (see below).

My observations of NPYMC performances, others in the Wellington region, and televised broadcasts of Te Matatini, showed that kapa haka guitarists may have several, shifting, or multiple roles within a group. As already discussed, guitarists generally seem to only accompany waiata-ā-ringa, poi, and waiata-tira. For mōteatea, haka, and some poi, then, they may put down or shoulder their instrument and become like other kaihaka; they will also often sing when playing. Guitarists, then, can become indistinguishable from other kaihaka by contributing to performances in various ways. Kaea may even double in the guitarist role, but this was considered a demanding combination by my informants and featured with only a few groups at Te Matatini 2009.

The overlapping between guitarist and other kaihaka roles is also evident in the clothing worn. Although Ngāti Pōneke guitarists, for instance, sometimes donned different outfits from the rest of the group—for example, blacks while others wear traditional clothing, perhaps to save time at concerts or if adults were accompanying the junior group (see Plate 29)—the wearing of identical clothing was more common, and is *de rigueur* for groups at regional and national competition level. Furthermore, NPYMC guitar straps are woven in the same tāniko patterns used for the group's kākahu (see Plate 30); another seemingly quite common practice (cf. Paringatai 2004:88).

The Māori strumming style's special aural qualities, which permit the guitarist to be heard by the whole group, also enable the accompaniment to provide a more general reference. According to Bill Nathan, for instance, guitar introductions, transitional bridges, and punctuating flourishes in elaborate competition items help orientate kaihaka as they perform the blend of choreography, singing, and actions involved with

[11] In the Māori language, the prefix "kai" can be attached to a verb—in this case, "rakuraku", a Māori term for the guitar—to denote the doer of a verb. Another term for guitarists I heard used was "kaiwhakatangi rakuraku", "kaiwhakatangi" being a general term for "musician".

each item: guitarists thus carry considerable responsibility to avoid misleading ropū through inaccurate playing (interview B). Often stationed near the rear of the group, guitarists also have a perspective that allows them to mould their accompaniment to the performance unfolding before them. As Ray Isaacs noted, guitarists may contribute more directly, too, "inject the promptings... do the whispering: 'Come up on the left'... they're the eyes and ears of the group" (interview). Michael Priest often took a very active role at Ngāti Pōneke concerts, calling out lines and commands. Given the guitarist's other responsibilities, however, such contributions are apparently not obligatory.

Guitarists, I also learned at NPYMC, would be expected to expressively complement the group performance. Interviewees told me that guitar introductions, for example, helped set the tone of items and needed to be played with appropriate feeling. At one stage during competition training, I was asked to soften my strumming for a "tangi" (lament) section of one item for just this reason. We were also expected to match the energy of high-spirited sequences. "You feed off whatever your guitarist is putting out there", one person confirmed, "your body feels the rhythm of it" ("Heni", interview). Indeed, one of the less-obvious benefits of the Māori strumming style is that the forceful strumming required to achieve a functional level of volume allows the guitarist to channel manifestations of ihi, wehi, and wana through physical movement. Such a physical style is highly suited to kapa haka (cf. Manins 1981:39). Group and guitarist, Michael Priest also noted, had a reciprocal connection:

> ***Michael Priest:*** If it's good strong guitaring, the group feels good within themselves. If the guitarist is off-key, the group doesn't feel as good and vice versa... I think you feed off each other. The group may come to a part where it's nice and quiet and they'll bring it to the guitarist. It's... a bit of give and take. [A]

However, Michael felt that a guitarist might ultimately have a fairly equivocal influence over groups. Thirty or forty kaihaka could generate an inertia or momentum against which it was inappropriate to battle. Complementariness, "give and take", seemed a more important goal.

Onstage positioning

There are several common onstage positions for kapa haka guitarists. A long-established and standard position in kapa haka generally is centred behind the group (see Plates 28, 29, 30; DVD2; cf. Armstrong 1986:57). At Ngāti Pōneke concerts, we occasionally moved forward as well, either between the men's rows or behind the women's second row, to improve audibility (the in-between placement being necessary to accommodate the guitar's long neck). In televised broadcasts, I have also observed guitarists standing on opposite sides of the matua, perhaps for similar reasons, although Michael Priest noted that this approach increases the risk of miscueing or desynchronisation. Rear positioning has other practical advantages for a guitarist. If they need to join a non-accompanied item then the most discreet place to leave the guitar, stage-rear, is conveniently nearby. In competition work, too, groups will often be seen to leave guitar stands with spare instruments here, together with objects like rākau (weapons) and taonga pūoro when these are not being used.

An unobtrusive guitarist positioning is also in keeping with some basic kapa haka performance values. The primary audience focus is the kaihaka, particularly the front rows. In serving a support role, accompanists are thus best positioned out of the way where they will not distract. As several practitioners pointed out, guitarists are essentially there for the group's benefit and it does not necessarily matter whether the audience can hear them clearly. Hence they need not be situated in a more prominent place.

These stage arrangements help explain why it seems more common for men to be guitarists. First, they already stand near the back rows, from where the guitar can be easily put aside for unaccompanied items. For a female guitarist to make an equivalent switch would be more complicated. Performance values are also a factor. As Bill Nathan explained, one reason women generally occupy the front rows for waiata-ā-ringa, poi, and waiata-tira items is "to use their beauty, their presence, to capture the imagination of the audience" (interview B). Having a male guitarist would thus allow a group to maximise their front row potential for concerts and competition marking. And, as one woman confidently asserted, most women would prefer this prime position to being "stuck behind a guitar" ("Heni", interview).

Plates 28 and 29: **Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club concerts**

Top: 1958 club concert with guitarist Johnny Clark; Bottom: ca.1950s concert with guitarist Duda Nikera.

Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club

Such conventions, however, are not necessarily fixed. Some ropū may be seen to spotlight their guitarists during competition brackets, even bringing them stage-front ("David", interview). Consistently, though, from my observations, guitarists still remain

with the group. They are not separated off in a special accompanist's area, but instead stand and move with other kaihaka, entering and exiting the stage with the ropū, taking their guitar with them, leaving nothing behind—like other members of a taua (warrior party). For this reason, the common rear positioning can itself be regarded as a key identifier of Māori cultural performance. The guitarist is like a special auxiliary who provides support for the group from the rear.

The competition stage

The practical functions and performance values which inform guitar accompaniment are also reflected in regional and national competition protocols. Cultural competitions have been held from at least the 1930s onwards (McLean 1996:343) and there are currently several different streams, including school, college and "Super 12" competitions. The following subsection deals with the Te Matatini and regional competitions; further research may reveal variations in how the guitar is treated elsewhere.

Te Matatini and regional competitions follow the same regulations regarding musical instruments (Te Matatini Society 2012:9). Along with taonga pūoro, a maximum of two stringed instruments may be used with each item. Guitars are by far the most common stringed instruments utilised, but in recent years some groups have deployed ukuleles (Mazer 2011:49). Guitars are thus accepted—although not prescribed—at the highest competitive levels of kapa haka.

The other guitar-related aspect of the Te Matatini regulations stipulates that only acoustic instruments can be used: no amplification other than via the festival's stage microphones is allowed. This proscription is significant in several respects. It ensures that the instrument remains primarily an accompaniment for the group's benefit, rather than for the audience. Nor is the guitarist consequently restricted in their movements through having to stand behind a microphone (a prospect Michael Priest and others found unwelcome). This simple rule thus serves to sustain the guitarist's integration with the ropū.

Kapa haka performance values are also evident in the guitar's treatment in competition judging. Guitar playing is neither a separate area of marking or recognised through

special prizes (as with kaea, kākahu, and original composition). Indeed, a guitarist apparently only becomes subject to direct scrutiny when putting down their instrument and performing unaccompanied items. Again, these emphases assert the primary importance of the main group performance, because if guitar playing were to be assessed, it would probably need to be amplified. A broader lack of formalised pedagogy—such as I observed at Ngāti Pōneke—may be another factor. Without accepted standards, te reo Māori nomenclature, and discourse, how could judgements about accompaniment be articulated and justified? As Michael observed:

Michael Priest: There's no written law that the judges are looking at, saying, "Oh, that shouldn't be there" or "That should be there". [...] There's no right or wrong way of playing guitar. Judges can't judge you on how you play the guitar. [A, B]

At the same time, Michael also acknowledged that guitar is probably considered within marking of the overall group sound: "If you hit a bum note, I don't know, 'Gee, that was ugly' ...and they'll mark you down". Another practitioner, Te Manaaroha Rollo, who has written a history of the national kapa haka competitions (Rollo 2007), also suggested guitarists would be indirectly judged in certain respects, such as contributing to the success of original compositions and affecting performance through cueing slip-ups (interview).

Given the special responsibilities they carry and unique contribution they make, kapa haka guitarists might thus seem rather overlooked on an official level. Bill Nathan suggested they were the "unsung heroes" of kapa haka: "I guess we see the guitarist as such an integral part that there is no need to separately address it" (interview A). Practitioners I spoke with had no complaints, though, aside from occasional gripes about the rigours of training. As Michael Priest put it: "You've got to get down and do the bizo and become part of it".

Historical reflections

The preceding discussion has highlighted the tight integration of guitarists in kapa haka, through their roles, functional and expressive contributions, appearance, positioning, and capacity for movement. These aspects help cast light on why guitars had supplanted instrumental ensembles and pianos in Māori cultural groups by the late-1940s, around

the same time the strumming style became established (see Chapter 6). This subsection argues that the guitar fulfilled three important requirements: portability, minimalism, and universality.

The portability of the acoustic guitar would seem to be a crucial factor in its use for Māori cultural performance. This allows the group to remain self-contained, mobile, and agile—traditional ideals related to the pōwhiri (marae rituals of encounter) and taua (warrior party)—with the guitarist as a special rear auxiliary. By contrast, neither a piano nor an ensemble would enable groups to so readily satisfy this ideal. An anecdote related about Ngāti Pōneke's early use of piano accompaniment highlights the compromises this necessitated:

> I can still remember [Sir Apirana] Ngata being infuriated by this when we went up to Otaki for some hui. They had a competition for action song and poi, and a piano had to be brought out onto the marae for me to play. They had to lift it out of the dining room onto the marae so Ngāti Pōneke could perform.
> (Jock McEwen in Grace et al. 2001:82)

Ngata was here responding to the piano's patent unwieldiness, which slowed proceedings and required special organisation. Interestingly, too, the only oral narrative about the guitar's adoption I have yet heard also concerns Ngata: according to Bill Nathan, in kapa haka circles he is believed to have encouraged the instrument's adoption by Māori groups. Bill believes this was probably related to its superior portability. A guitar also permits the accompanist to sing, stand and perform takahia (unlike a pianist or steel guitarist), and otherwise replicate kaihaka dance rhythms and stances (see Plate 30). Perhaps no other instrument with comparable audibility could enable an accompanist to so closely approach a normal kaihaka role.

Minimalism has potentially been another key factor in the guitar's adoption in kapa haka. If, as proposed in the previous chapter, the addition of Hawai'ian ensembles to 1920s-1930s concert parties was one avenue by which guitars entered Māori music, then their subsequent reduction to just one or two shoulder-slung guitars is significant. By restricting accompaniment to a strictly functional level of volume, attention remained firmly on the kaihaka. Even two guitars are less sonically dominating than a piano. Such minimalisation also accords with an easily overlooked aspect of Māori

dance traditions: unlike many other indigenous Polynesian examples, they have not generally featured specialist musical accompaniment (e.g., Rarotongan or Tahitian drum ensembles). Instead, "accompaniment" has usually been self-created via body percussion and takahia, piupiu, and the unique poi, which is both dance object and taonga pūoro (Flintoff 2004:85-87). By minimising specialist "musicians" and merging them into the matua, the traditional Māori inspirations for kapa haka have been clarified.

Plate 30: **Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club competition performance, 2010**
Guitarists Michael Priest and Michael Brown stand to the rear. *Danessa Hill*

A third factor recommending the guitar's adoption by Māori groups in the mid-twentieth century could have been its universality: the instrument was by this stage widely available in New Zealand and used for many genres of music. Crucially, it had no single iconic association. Thus, while there was enthusiasm during the 1920s and 1930s for replicating the Polynesian sounds of Hawai'ian music, significantly it was *hapa haole*'s least-exclusive ingredient—strummed backing guitars, which also featured in country and swing jazz—that was adopted in the longer term. Guitars did not put such a strong "Hawai'ian" mark on cultural performance as ukuleles or steel guitars did.

They were an instrument Māori could more readily "make their own". This factor perhaps also accounts for the earlier preference for another "universal" instrument: the piano. However, Te Puoho Katene notes, concert parties switched to guitars in the 1940s partly because "Listeners preferred the sound to that of the piano, which they began to consider a quaint, un-Māori instrument" (1998:937). Having been the preeminent instrument of colonial Pākehā society (Moffat 2009), the sound of the piano perhaps evoked a recent past that Māori were seeking to surmount through cultural revival. The guitar, by contrast, was a universal instrument that in the New Zealand context did not carry this historical "baggage".

Minimal guitar accompaniment thus provided an effective way to advance Māori cultural performance, both enabling the development of modern genres like waiata-ā-ringa and reaffirming traditional values. The Māori strumming style—seemingly adopted in parallel during the 1940s—also supported this innovation. Strummed and percussively-stopped chords blended well with the Māori performance soundscape: there were no single-note lines piercing through the mix. Nor did the style involve a conspicuous virtuosity that might draw attention away from the kaihaka.

If guitars thus helped redefine the Māori concert party of the 1940s to 1950s period, they also aided the subsequent shift to a "performing arts" paradigm. Innovations in this regard during the 1960s were the composition of more musically-complicated items and the "artistic revelation" of the 1963 Te Arohanui Company's elaborate stage choreography (Katene 1998:937). A seminal example of the sophisticated material pioneered in this decade is 'Tangihia', a waiata-ā-ringa structured into three parts with different keys, meters, and feels (see Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club 1973). Guitar accompaniment facilitated the composition of such items, Bill Nathan noted, because chromatic key changes and other transitions could be accomplished on guitar without great technical skill (i.e. by just using barre chords). The accompaniment's secondary function as an aural reference for choreography became a natural corollary. The versatility of the guitar has thus supported the ongoing evolution of Māori performing arts into the present day.

Commentary on the kapa haka guitar accompaniment

Guitar accompaniment, as we have seen, is a ubiquitous, carefully modulated, and integrated feature of contemporary kapa haka. But what commentary has the accompaniment attracted over the years? A national investigation of the oral discourses surrounding Māori cultural performance, to help answer this question, has been beyond the scope of my fieldwork. This section instead examines selected comments I have traced in published writings and other public discourses, as well as more indirect "commentary" offered by te reo Māori terms for the guitar. (Reviews of cultural LP recordings are covered in Chapter 8.) These suggest that guitar accompaniment—as at a practical level and in competitions—has been embraced and yet taken-for-granted, becoming "informally institutionalised" into Māori cultural performance. The section concludes by discussing some possible explanations for this situation.

Mention of guitar accompaniment in Māori cultural performance has been traced in books, articles, and concert reviews dating back to the 1920s. Rarely, however, do these do more than simply register the guitar's use (e.g., see *The Dominion*, 9/8/1933, p.2; King 1977:117-119; Shennan 1984:59; Armstrong 1986:57; Ngata and Armstrong 2002 [1960]:17). Nonetheless, even this minimal "reception history" of the accompaniment implies—indirectly—a matter-of-fact acceptance of the instrument in this context. By the 1950s, it was being assumed by some to be a normal and unremarkable element of Māori cultural performance. As Alan Armstrong, a Pākehā army officer who organised concert parties and regularly contributed to the journal *Te Ao Hou*, sucinctly stated: "The guitar is as much a feature of the modern Maori musical scene as the koauau was of the old" (1959).

At the same time, I have also traced some comments critical of guitar usage. As the guitar is a modern Western element in a performance practice whose traditional inspirations are highly valued, this is perhaps unsurprising. Criticisms have been made on various grounds. In 1939, for example, the Pākehā composer Alfred Hill complained that the unique qualities of Māori music were being displaced by the Hawai'ian influence of guitars, ukuleles, and Westernised tunes (Thomson 1991:203). Twenty years later, the inclusion of guitars in the theatre show, *Maori*, also drew censure from reviewers who found it "untraditional" (*The Dominion* 25/9/1958, p.12) and

"distracting" (*The Evening Post* 25/9/1958, p.8). While these comments were presumably also made by Pākehā writers, some Māori have also questioned the instrument's suitability (e.g., Hill 1964:40) or alluded to "purist" criticism of its use (Rikihana 1992:2) over the years.

Most recently, some concerns have been raised about the guitar's ongoing usage for kapa haka in the context of the taonga puōro revival. Jo'el Komene, for example, commented in the television series *Whare Tapere*:

> The guitar has carried the tune of our songs for so long. I would like to see a return to our own instruments so all Māori know these treasures and their purpose, how to use them.... I get a little sad when I see the guitar, but it's still there.[12]

Certain kapa haka groups, too, have apparently sought to minimise guitar use in favour of accompaniment via body percussion, poi, and taonga pūoro ("Heni", interview). Yet I have found no evidence of any widespread call for guitar use to be scaled back. Indeed, Hirini Melbourne, a leader of Haumanu—the group who have led the revival of taonga pūoro since the late-1980s (Flintoff 2004:7-10)—was a noted guitarist himself. Overall, then, criticism of guitar accompaniment would seem to be just as subdued as the more general commentary. Compared with long-running debates surrounding other Western influences on Māori music, such as the borrowing of popular tunes for waiata-ā-ringa (e.g., see Ramsden 1949; Thomas 1981), guitars have aroused little controversy.

Another kind of "commentary" on kapa haka accompaniment is provided by the various te reo Māori names for the guitar which variously translate, reconceptualise, or redefine the instrument through the lens of the Māori language. Those I have found in dictionaries or collected from people (marked with asterisk) include:

kitā*	(Ngata 1993; Ryan 1997; Māori Language Commission 2008)
kutā; kūtā*	(Ngata 1993; Moorfield 2005)
kitā noa	(Ryan 1997)
kitā hiko	(Ryan 1997)
kūhiko	(Cleave et al. 1978)
te rākau whakatangi*	

[12] Māori Television, broadcast 27 February 2008. English translation as given in programme subtitles.

kū*	(Ngata 1993)
kūono*	
rakuraku*	(Calman and Sinclair 2001; Māori Language Commission 2008)
rakiraki*	

Further research may reveal when these terms began to be created, but printed usage for the two most common, "kitā" and "rakuraku", can be traced back some forty years (see Paki 1972:20, 24).[13] "Kitā" and "kutā" are fairly straightforward transliterations, sometimes further qualified with "noa" (ordinary) or "hiko" (lightning flash) to denote acoustic or electric models. "Te rākau whakatangi" is metaphorical, comparing the guitar to a wooden stick or weapon on which music is played. Another approach has been to transfer the name of the taonga pūoro with most resemblance to the guitar, the kū, a single-stringed bow that was tapped, with the mouth being used as a resonator (Flintoff 2004:43). An interesting kū-related name is "kūono"—"ono" denoting the guitar's six strings—which was apparently coined by Hirini Melbourne at a workshop in the late-1990s ("David", interview). Probably the most common term of all is "rakuraku", a pan-Polynesian term meaning "to scratch with the fingernails or claws" (Biggs and Clark 2010). According to Charles Royal, "rakuraku" refers directly to the strumming action (interview A).

Several broad suppositions can be made on the basis of this collection of te reo Māori names for the guitar. Their profusion, as proposed in regard to the many *jingajik* names, testifies to the widespread usage of guitars by Māori, indicating just how popular the instrument has been over the years. But they also suggest that, as yet, no single standard Māori identifier for the guitar has emerged. "Depending where you go they'll have their own little names for the guitar", one person confirmed ("David", interview). The liberty people have taken in identifying the instrument in their own ways and circulating these in oral tradition can be taken as another indicator of the apparent lack of formal standardisation around guitar accompaniment in kapa haka, the preeminent arena for Māori cultural performance.

[13] In this citation, "rakuraku" is used to denote a ukulele. The Māori Language Commission (2008) cites the earliest printed usage of "rakuraku" applied to the guitar as 1993.

The plenitude of names also points to a lack of obvious precedents for guitars in traditional Māori music. During the nineteenth-century, European instruments often acquired the names of taonga pūoro they resembled and, in some cases, replaced (Flintoff 2004:17). The guitar, however, was only widely taken up after the 1920s and does not readily correspond to any precursors. While the guitar-kū comparison has been made, the instruments are actually quite dissimilar: the kū is very quiet. Similarly, although some taonga pūoro were used to keep a beat for songs, chants, and a few dances—including the rōria (jew's harp), hue rarā (gourd shakers), and tumutumu (struck stones)—the guitar is far louder, noisier, and deeper-toned.

The guitar is something new, then, a musical ingredient that has helped Māori cultural performance evolve since the 1940s to meet fresh aspirations and challenges (e.g., maintaining cultural traditions and Māori language fluency during the urban migration period). The lack of sustained criticism of the guitar's use, on the grounds of it being "untraditional" or having displaced taonga pūoro, is perhaps tacit recognition of this. In the process, the guitar has become "informally institutionalised" into kapa haka. Embraced for its functional utility, the accompaniment remains unstandardised in regard to areas like competition marking and terminology, and—if my experience at Ngāti Pōneke is representative—learning processes and strumming patterns (although further ethnographic studies are needed to confirm this). Guitar accompaniment has—conceptually—continued to be taken-for-granted. As people observed:

> ***Bill Nathan:*** When it comes to kapa haka, it's just a natural thing to have a guitar. [B]
> ***"Heni":*** It's just there... part of our environment. It's whānau if you like, it's been adopted.
> ***"David":*** It's become natural in our world. Next to the poi and patu. The guitar is right next door.

What has ensured this unformalised status of guitars in Māori cultural performance for so long? Given that the preservation of traditional Māori culture has been of paramount concern throughout the twentieth-century, the guitar has perhaps simply been overlooked. Such concerns have only intensified since the Māori Renaissance of the 1970s. "Our attention", one practitioner observed, "in terms of... maintaining a certain tradition is more focused on our stance, our style, our language use" ("Heni", interview). Guitars have thus become an element to which, like vernacular speech, "minimum attention is paid" (cf. Labov 1972:112). Yet this does not wholly explain the

seven-decade long shortage of more substantial public commentary. As will be argued in Chapter 8, to understand why the Māori strumming style has remained for so long intertwined with the vernacular, we must consider its place in the broader context of New Zealand society.

Summary

This chapter has investigated guitar accompaniment in Māori strumming style as realised in the Māori performing arts of kapa haka. Fieldwork carried out in the Wellington region at Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club has formed the basis of the findings, with additional interviews and other material helping support aspects of a broader—more exploratory—analysis. The chapter has discussed basic functions of guitar accompaniment, how it was learned, practised, and modulated in the Ngāti Pōneke context, along with the accompanist's onstage role. The chapter also looked at the little extant commentary on guitar accompaniment that has been traced in public discourses.

The chapter has shown guitar accompaniment to be an ubiquitous element of kapa haka nationally, considered by many I talked with as virtually essential in items using Western diatonic harmony. Here, the accompaniment holds the singing key, supplies chord changes, and keeps the beat, thereby helping unify stage items involving up to forty or more performers. With its fully-strummed chords and clear aural contrasts, the Māori strumming style enables one or two guitars to remain distinguishable in a dense sonic environment. My fieldwork at at Ngāti Pōneke shows that it can also be modulated to accommodate modern influences and traditional features of Māori music. There was little formal pedagogy, traditional nomenclature, or strict conventions around kapa haka accompaniment at Ngāti Pōneke, thus permitting the vernacular basis of the strumming style to be retained to some extent. But during the competition training process, it was applied with increasingly self-conscious discipline, as befitting the expectations and prestige attached to regional and national competitions. The vernacular in kapa haka strumming thus became subsumed by other musical values, the accompaniments themselves being refined and achieving a spare functional beauty in the process. Guitarists retained the idiolectic distinctiveness of their style, though, being recognised by the group as "ours".

The chapter has also found that guitarists are highly integrated with kapa haka ropū, often overlapping into the performance areas of other kaihaka, blending-in visually onstage, and moving with the group as special auxiliaries. This integration supports the traditional performance values of kapa haka by helping maintain the focus on the main group. The chapter has also argued that such factors help explain why the guitar has been the preferred accompaniment since the late-1940s. Lightness, portability, versatility, and technical accessibility have all recommended it, while the strumming style's efficiency has allowed the instrument's use to better match kapa haka's traditional inspirations. In the process, guitars have become "informally institutionalised" in kapa haka—an essential but taken-for-granted element—a status reflected in the minimal public commentary the instrument's role has attracted.

Chapter 8

The strumming style in New Zealand

In September 1986, the band Crowded House, led by Pākehā songwriter Neil Finn, released their second ever single, 'Don't dream it's over', and by April 1987, it had become a worldwide hit: number two on the American *Billboard* Hot 100, number one in Canada and New Zealand, and with high placements elsewhere. Several years later, Finn casually ascribed the song's success to use of "a classic Maori strum" he had learned growing up in Te Awamutu (quoted in McCabe 1995:D2). 'Don't dream it's over', then, is a high profile example of the Māori strumming style's spread beyond Māori communities into recorded music and Pākehā music-making. This diffusion raises two important questions. First, how has the style spread? Second, what changes and new meanings have arisen in the process? This chapter seeks to answer these questions by investigating wider usage of the strumming style in New Zealand music. It begins by examining the strumming style's presence on post-1950s Māori music recordings (nationwide), then looks at its adoption by Pākehā (mainly in terms of the Wellington region but also, as far as the evidence allows, elsewhere in New Zealand). The chapter then surveys its usage on (non-Māori) New Zealand popular music recordings, concluding with a discussion of the term "Māori strum".

The cumulative evidence suggests that while the Māori guitar strumming style may be the most popular and enduring guitar style to have yet emerged in New Zealand, it also has been curiously overlooked and holds ambiguous meanings. In the final section, the chapter argues that this situation makes us reassess Charles Keil's theory that thriving styles require the groups who create them to work with and transcend the stereotypes of the dominant culture (Keil and Feld 1994:197-217). The strumming style's vernacular basis, I contend, has subtly supported negative Pākehā images of Māori and, consequently, Māori have embraced more unambiguously-positive options in the broader New Zealand context—a possibility not available for the American ethnic groups from whose music styles Keil's theory is derived.

Māori music recordings

By the mid-twentieth century, recorded-sound technologies had become crucial conduits for the dissemination of music in New Zealand, including Māori music. Gramophones were common in households by the mid-1920s (Thomson 1991:165), while an estimated eighty-four percent of households owned radios by 1939 (Day 1994:247). Recordings thus represent an important medium by which the Māori strumming style—or at least an awareness of it—has penetrated the general New Zealand population. The following section surveys recordings of cultural performance and popular music by Māori performing artists, where the strumming style can be readily identified. Although not comprehensive, it demonstrates the style's enduring presence in local recordings, along with aspects of stylistic variation and development.

Māori cultural performance

The first commercial recordings of Māori performers were 78rpm shellac discs released in the late-1920s and early-1930s by, among others, Ana Hato and the Rotorua Maori Choir (McLean 1996:320). The recordings of The Tahiwis, a family group from Otaki, are of special interest for including Hawai'ian steel guitar on some tracks (although played by Australian session musicians). The Māori guitar strumming style is not used on these early recordings, though, and only appears on commercial discs from the 1950s onwards.

Albums of Māori cultural performance that began to be released in the 1950s comprise the largest body of recordings featuring the guitar strumming style. The vinyl 10" LP *Aotearoa Maori Concert Party* (Aotearoa Maori Entertainers [1957]) is probably the first example of this genre, which became well-established during the New Zealand industry's expansion in the late-1950s. By 1963, one reviewer noted, it was becoming "difficult... to keep pace with" new releases of Māori cultural recordings (Armstrong 1963:55). The labels Kiwi and Viking dominated the field, releasing a combined total of 160 LPs, EPs, and 7" singles between 1958 and 1981; other labels also made significant contributions (see Appendix 7 for a checklist of these and other Māori recordings). There are no published discographies or studies of these records and some background discussion is thus necessary.

Māori cultural recordings feature various kinds of groups, including urban and marae-based concert parties, tourist troupes, army groups, church choirs, and school clubs. By the mid-1960s, unrecorded groups felt the attraction of being represented on vinyl and gaining some income. According to Bill Nathan, for example, Ngāti Pōneke recorded their first album in 1964 partly because "we had... won some competitions... had a reputation and a quality about us... we just thought, basically, we should be out there too!" (interview B). The genre had several markets. Tourists, for example, were a key audience. Māori culture has long been a major New Zealand tourist attraction, but the advent of affordable jet travel in the 1960s saw demand increase exponentially: international visitor numbers rose from 36,000 in 1960 to 445,000 in 1980 (Belich 2001:452). The New Zealand public were another prime market, with LPs albums sold through retail outlets and some being reissued by the popular World Record Club mail-order firm. Yet another market was with the performing groups themselves. The combined sales figure for these records is unknown. Some perhaps sold only a few hundred copies, but others were extremely successful. By the 1990s, for example, *Waiata Maori* (Te Wiata [1966]) had sold at least 40,000 units (Dart 1994:61); *Songs of New Zealand* (New Zealand Maori Chorale 1978) apparently sold a similar amount (Keith Southern, pers. comm. 14/5/2009).

The first post-WWII Māori cultural LP (Aotearoa Maori Entertainers [1957]) features acoustic-guitar accompaniment, as do the approximately sixty others I have listened to and this probably holds for most examples (the main exceptions being albums devoted to archival material).[1] Strumming in the Māori style, then, was part of the sound of Māori cultural recordings from the very start, the albums now comprising an "archive" of the style's development, documenting different approaches to chordwork and ornamentation, and the emergence of types of strum patterns. Earlier albums seem to feature mainly swing, straight, and waltz-time strums, for instance, but by the early-1960s, syncopated strums were being increasingly used. Likewise, the earliest recording of a compound-time strum I have traced dates from the mid-1960s (see Figure 14). The LP *The Beauty of Maori Song* (St. Joseph's Maori Girls College Choir and Concert

[1] A few recordings I have heard include tracks which diverge from the single/twin acoustic guitar accompaniment, including ukulele (e.g., Te Wiata [1966]) or electric guitar (e.g., Te Pataka Maori Entertainers [1967]).

Party 1973) provides a good demonstration of the many kinds of patterns in use by the early-1970s.

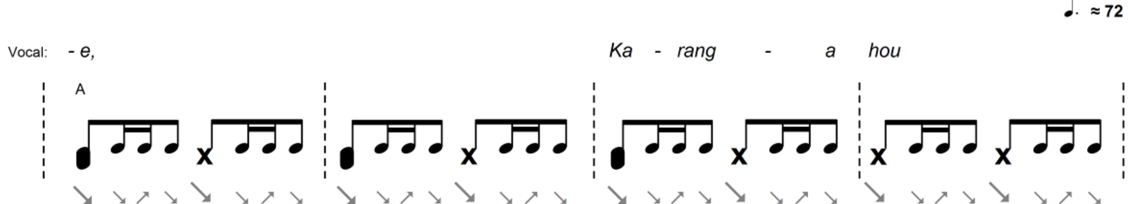


Figure 14: **'Haere mai' strum**

From 1st Battalion New Zealand Regiment Concert Party [1965]

The audibility of guitar accompaniment on these albums varies considerably, thus revealing something of the special challenge it presented. While guitar audibility was probably seen as a largely practical matter in live performance (see Chapter 7), it had to be considered in a different way for recordings: as part of the overall "sound" of Māori cultural performance being captured for listeners. Just *how* prominent the guitar should be, then, became a significant new aesthetic decision. According to Tony Vercoe, the Kiwi method was to adjust group microphones within an overall mix "to keep the guitar audible, but not intrusive". "We would consult the leader... to see if he was happy with it" (interview B). Keith Southern, sound engineer on many Viking and South Pacific LPs, told me that he used a separate guitar microphone to give more flexibility at the final mixing stage (pers. comm. 14/5/2009).

The prominence of guitar accompaniment also became a recurring topic in critical reception of these LPs. The largest body of published reviews of these recordings was written by Alan Armstrong, a Pākehā army officer and concert party organiser, for the Māori Affairs Department magazine *Te Ao Hou*. Armstrong covers various matters in his reviews—he often assumed a strong advisory stance—including some brief asides about guitar, therefore giving a modest, but unique historical insight into how an informed commentator regarded the instrument's role at the time. Armstrong was an early defender of the guitar in Māori cultural performance, accusing those who criticised its use as "not facing the facts of life" (1959), but he later expressed reservations. He observed, for instance, that it could become a "psychological prop" for groups (1967:61). His most extended statement is found in a 1968 review:

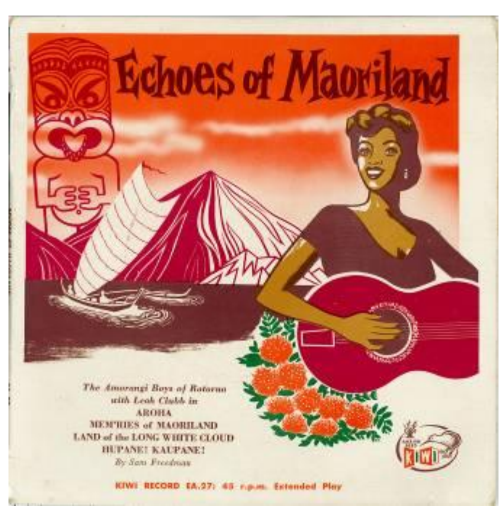
> The record cover notes, rather apologetically, that although 'all songs are usually performed unaccompanied… in this recording a guitar was used in two of the action songs for purposes of rhythm'. I have noted before among Maori groups this guilt complex about having items accompanied by a guitar. There are, of course, some items such as waiata etc., which should not be accompanied. However, I can see no special virtue in action songs being unaccompanied and indeed a tasteful guitar or other accompaniment can often enhance an item immeasurably. (1968:63)

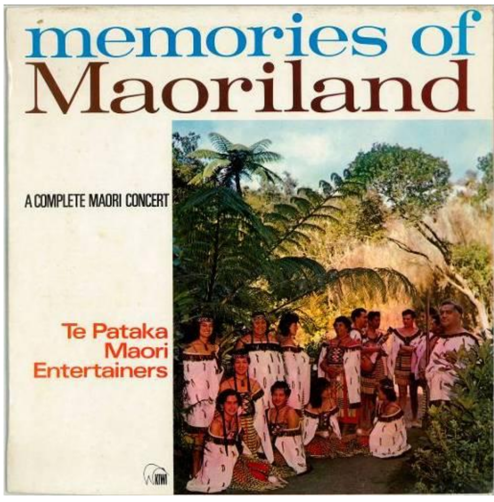
Elsewhere, Armstrong consistently praises "tasteful" guitar backing, preferring simplicity over "jazzy accompaniments" (1968:62, 1966:52). Conversely, intrusive high volume and monotonous strumming—described variously as "thumping out a constant rhythm" (1967:61) or "reminiscent of a steam hammer" (1969:61)—were criticised.

Such commentary shows how the Māori cultural recordings, by bringing guitar accompaniment into clearer focus, stimulated a new critical appreciation. Nonetheless, guitars remain a minor topic in Armstrong's reviews, thus generally conforming to the dearth of published commentary about guitar accompaniment noted in Chapter 7. Album packaging deals with the guitar in a similarly taken-for-granted way. Guitars appear on a few album covers—a normal part of the image of Māori cultural performance (see Plate 31)—with accompaniment seldom singled-out for discussion in sleeves notes and guitarists, like most kaihaka, generally going uncredited.

New releases of Māori cultural recordings tailed off in the 1980s, even as vinyl records were supplanted by cassette tapes and CDs—most currently-available examples are reissues. The recording genre's 1950s-1970s heyday seems to have been created by a combination of favourable factors, including the post-WWII flourishing of Māori cultural clubs, the expanding local record industry, and the growing tourist market. The 1970s brought changes, however, including tougher financial conditions for key labels like Kiwi (see McLean, G. 2007:158-160). The paradigm of Māori cultural performance was also changing. The 1972 inauguration of the New Zealand Polynesian Festival signalled an increasing emphasis on competition and creation innovation. Māori, one might say, were beginning to define their cultural performance more independently of non-Māori audiences, stepping beyond the entertainment-focused "concert party" tradition and embracing the new paradigm of "Māori performing arts", a change that

can be connected with the wider Māori Renaissance (cf. Fleras and Spoonley 1999:86-87).[2] This self-redefinition was linguistically consolidated by the adoption of the Māori umbrella-term "kapa haka" during the 1980s. The 1950s-1970s recordings, then, both stylistically and even by virtue of being commercial products intended for the general public, embodied the values of the earlier era and their 1980s decline reflected new goals and ideologies. Making recordings had never been the *raison d'être* of Māori cultural performance in any case, meaning that this element did not need to be maintained.





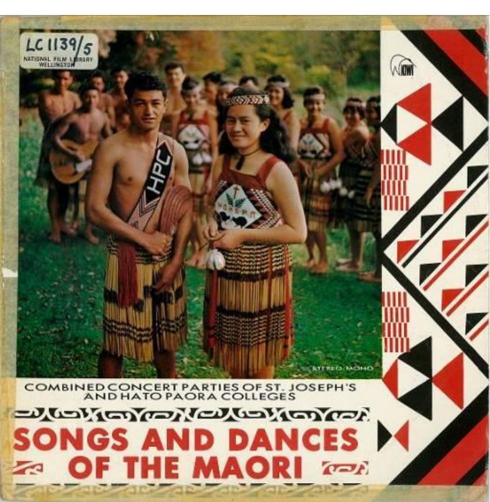


Plate 31: **Māori cultural group EP and LP covers**

Michael Brown; Alistair Gilkison (top left)

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[2] On a different but comparable shift in American jazz from an "entertainment" to "art" paradigm, see Taylor 1978.

Popular music

Records by Māori popular artists comprise another important body of recorded music featuring the Māori guitar strumming style. Exactly when the style first appears on such recordings is difficult to determine, though, partly due to their sheer quantity and ensemble popular music formats: rhythm-guitar parts are easily submerged within band arrangements and, conversely, bass-drum combinations may create an illusion of the style's presence. Dating its first appearance is complicated still further by the use of similar guitar styles on 1950s Hawai'ian-influenced "South Seas" recordings (see below). The survey given in this subsection, therefore, relies on two obvious touchstones: first, recordings on which the Māori style's use has already been already identified by writers; and second, recordings of songs in the Māori language.

The Howard Morrison Quartet (HMQ) is the most prominent group to have employed the Māori strumming style on their records. This vocal group originally performed on a semi-professional basis at social functions in the Rotorua area, but turned fully professional in 1958 and soon found a mass audience for their combination of covers, Māori songs, and humorous parodies (Bourke 2010:331, 334-343). A vital Quartet member was guitarist Gerry Merito (1938-2009). The HMQ's leader, Howard Morrison (1936-2009), apparently first heard him play at a family party—"I couldn't get over how strong an acoustic guitar player he was" (Morrison and Costello 1992:43)—and he was soon recruited. Merito would contribute heavily to the Quartet's act, writing most of their parodies and providing accompaniment using his own version of the Māori strumming style. Many of the Quartet's publicity photographs also show him with an acoustic guitar: the instrument was thus integral to the group's sound and image (see Plate 32). Chris Bourke describes the origins of Merito's guitar style:

> An aunt showed Merito three chords on the guitar, and how to strum; anything else, he learnt from listening to country music on the radio. His aunt's style of strumming was flamenco-influenced, with her fingers stroking 'all the strings, right across the guitar'. Merito used this style in the Quartet, and later developed his own style, plucking the top [bass E] string down with his thumb, while bringing the bottom strings up. 'So you had that bass sound all the time....' (2010:335)

Unfortunately, the finer details of Merito's strumming are often difficult to hear on the Quartet's records, as they were often backed by a session band, but is fairly audible on their early singles, coming across as driving and filled-out. One such example is the group's first hit, *Hoki mai* ([1958]), a pepped up version of Henare Waitoa's 'Tomo mai e tama ma', that had already become a Māori party favourite (Spittle 1997:35). As noted in Chapter 6, this song is strongly associated with the *jingajik* pattern.

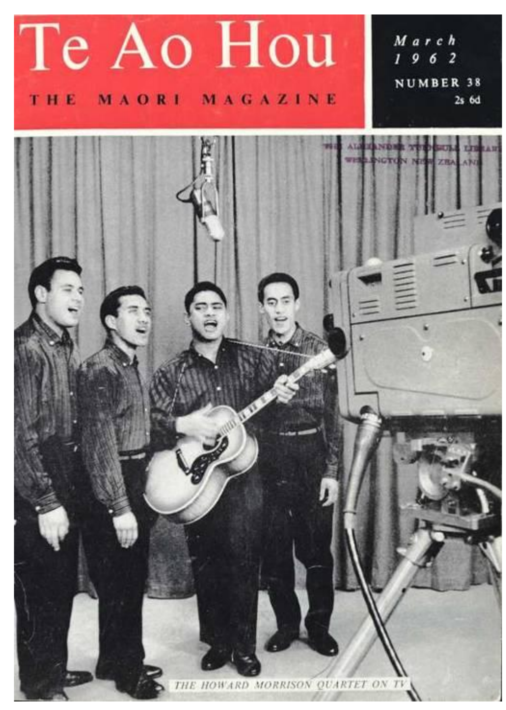

Plate 32: **The Howard Morrison Quartet**

Michael Brown; Alexander Turnbull Library (right)

After six years of accolades and hundreds of thousands of record sales, the HMQ disbanded in 1964. Two of their parody singles, *Battle of the Waikato* ([1960a]) and *My Old Man's an All Black* ([1960b]), both featuring *jingajik*-type strums, sold at least 60,000 copies each (Staff and Ashley 2002:151; Bourke 2010:340). These records thus saw a distinctive variant of the Māori guitar strumming style being widely disseminated in New Zealand. Bourke claims Merito thus has had a singular influence:

> There's a good case to be made for Merito being the most influential New Zealand guitarist of all.... Wherever there is a singalong, wherever a New Zealander plays a few chords with an idiosyncratic strum - throwing in a tricky turnaround just to show you're no mug - there goes the spirit of Gerry Merito. (2009)

Although such claims cannot be objectively proven, the Howard Morrison Quartet probably made the largest single contribution to the Māori strumming style's spread via recorded media (see more below).

The mid-1950s to mid-1960s period also saw the appearance of many other Māori groups, including "Māori showbands" like the Maori Hi-Fives, Quin Tikis, and Maori Volcanics, who blended cabaret and variety traditions by combining songs, skits and Māori items into polished entertainment packages (Bourke 2010:328-333). While showbands usually featured several guitarists, the strumming style has a fairly minimal presence on most recordings I have heard: the "showband" approach involved ensemble arrangements—often including brass and keyboards—which tend to obscure the rhythm guitar (but see The Quin Tikis [1968]).

The strumming style has a more palpable presence on recordings made by Māori vocal groups working in a lighter "pop" style with sparser instrumentation. These include well-known groups like The Kini Quartet and others with more local followings (e.g., Ken Eru and his Geysertones). Many of these groups released recordings that are devoted to Māori material, with strummed backing on acoustic or electric guitars, sometimes as part of a Hawai'ian steel/ukulele/bass ensemble. As amplification enables a lighter address of the instrument—percussive damping, for instance, can be achieved with minimal physical movement—these records document smoother versions of the strumming style. Particularly notable in this respect are records by the whānau-based group, The Maniapoto Voices (1966a; 1966b; [1967?]), which feature Māori material accompanied by guitarists using jazz chording and twin-strum stereo arrangements.

Interestingly, the strumming on these 1960s Māori pop records—through their use of electric guitar timbres, minimalistic patterns, and extra Hawai'ian stylings—often recalls the playing on 1950s "South Seas" recordings, thus raising new questions about the Māori strumming style's historical emergence and development. What is here called "South Seas" was a slower, softer variant of Hawai'ian *hapa haole* with electric instrumentation developed in the 1950s by local Polynesian musicians, notably Tongan-born steel guitarists Bill Wolfgramm and Bill Sevesi, and others, including Pākehā songwriter, Sam Freedman (Sampson 1998). Many of their 1950s and 1960s records

feature what sounds to be a *jing jik* backing within the ensemble; and, in fact, some of the same guitarists played on the 1960s pop records described above.[3] Are such strums manifestations of the Māori strumming style? Or of a separate Hawai'ian-inspired style? Or was there a mingling of influences? Such questions await future research, but at the very least these "South Seas" strums probably lent a kind of kindred support to the spread of Māori strumming style.

During the 1970s and 1980s, new Māori popular recordings featured far less guitar strumming. One major exception is the single *Maoris on 45* (The Consorts 1982), produced by Dalvanius Prime of the Patea Māori Club, which achieved considerable chart success (Scapolo 1997:65). Inspired by the Dutch novelty group, Stars on 45, *Maoris on 45* splices together an introductory verse celebrating the party singalong ("Everybody sing a Māori song/The tunes are simple, try and sing along/The ukulele it will play for you/The melody and the guitar, too") with five classic Māori items—including 'Hoki mai e tama ma' and 'Pa mai'—over a *jingajik* strum, bass and drum machine. *Maoris on 45* was something of a novelty one-off, however, with the principal genre influences on Māori popular music at this time giving acoustic guitars less prominence.

A significant 1980s influence of Māori popular music was Jamaican reggae (Cattermole 2011). The appeal of reggae partly related to its messages of political emancipation, which groups like Aotearoa and Dread Beat and Blood could readily adapt to Māori political topics. According to Jennifer Cattermole, the rhythmic feel of reggae—namely the accentuated offbeats of guitar "skanking"—may have also aligned with existing Māori and Polynesian guitar strumming patterns, thus allowing these to be easily carried over (51-52). This layering process, Cattermole suggests, may have in turn contributed to the rolling or legato flavour of New Zealand reggae (54-55). However, this influence seems fairly subtle, as reggae rhythms have their own distinctive emphases which do not always align with those of strums like the *jingajik*. Nonetheless, a New Zealand reggae strumming style played on acoustic guitars—performed by street musicians and heard on Tiki Taane's hit single 'Always on my mind' (Tiki 2008)—has definitely emerged.

[3] Johnny Bradfield, for example, played rhythm guitar with several key Hawai'ian and "South Seas" groups of the 1950s and The Maniapoto Voices (Gifford 2007a).

Māori popular artists have continued to incorporate and develop new sounds in the last two decades, with the Māori strumming style occasionally noted as an influence by performers (e.g., see Malo 1995; Gifford 2007b; Story 2008) and critics (e.g., Bollinger 2009:242). Clear manifestations of the style on recordings, however, seem to be relatively rare.[4]

The survey of Māori music recordings above, although not comprehensive, suggests some broader conclusions. With a few later exceptions, the strumming style probably had its most significant presence on recordings in the 1950s-1960s era, being disseminated in a clearly audible form on hundreds of records, some selling tens of thousands of copies. The style was also transformed in various creative ways—translated onto electric guitar, given jazz flavours, or integrated into instrumental ensembles—changes that generally allowed it to remain recognisable as such. These recordings also show the style being extended beyond its vernacular roots, with individual strumming idiolects being performed with the care and discipline befitting the imperatives of cultural performance and commercial music production. Other signs of the vernacular were also maintained with these shifts: altogether, despite its presence on hundreds of records, this distinctive style was largely taken-for-granted as a topic in music criticism and overlooked as a commercial selling-point (see more below).

Pākehā and the Māori strumming style

While the Māori guitar strumming style is primarily identified in New Zealand as "Māori", it has also been heard, learned, and played by Pākehā and other New Zealanders. The extent of such crossovers are difficult to gauge—they are certainly alluded by various writers (e.g., Davies 2001; Hutchins 2008:217) and musicians (e.g., Geoff Chunn, Neil Finn)—but that they have occurred at all demonstrates some broad social changes in New Zealand over the last fifty years. In 1959, Keith Sinclair observed that Māori and Pākehā essentially "live apart... [and] retain different social patterns and values" (1959:289), a separation replicated in music culture. Allan Thomas, for instance, has shown that Māori and Pākehā music-making occupied largely separate worlds in 1946 Hawera (2004:137). Since the 1950s, however, the experiences of

[4] For one recent example, see the track 'Iwi' by the group Iwi (1999).

Pākehā, Māori, and other ethnic groups have become increasingly interwoven (although obviously certain cultural demarcations are still strongly maintained). The take-up of Māori strumming among Pākehā is one indicator of this. This section looks at various Pākehā experiences of Māori strumming, the New Zealand singalong anthem 'Ten guitars', issues of cultural crossover, and the English-language names for the *jingajik* strum. Overall, these subtopics reveal some of the tensions and negotiations that have accompanied this musical traverse.

Encounters with the strumming style

While researching this ethnography, I conversed with dozens of Pākehā in the Wellington region about the Māori strumming style, and corresponded with others from around New Zealand. There were varying levels of awareness. Some were completely unfamiliar with the style, others knew what I was talking about but had "never really thought about it before". A substantial proportion, though, recognised terms like "the Māori strum" or had been to guitar parties—and several played the style themselves. Some of these experiences are presented below in people's own words.

Mitch Park *remembered the style growing up in 1950s Wellington:* As primary school kids some friends and I played like that in the late-1950s, imitating the Howard Morrison hits of the day. I remember going with my parents to a party in Eastbourne in the late-1940s or early-1950s where somebody sang to that kind of accompaniment. (email 18/1/2009)

"Mel" *(anonymous) encountered the style growing up in 1960s Wellington*: The first time… was some Māori guys in the school band… and it was really awe-inspiring… that rhythm, it was so catchy…. I couldn't afford to buy a guitar so I built one when I was about twelve. My mate, his old man had a drum kit... and we used to bang around in the bedroom trying to do 'Wipeout' and 'Venus'... another one that has that rhythm.... Anyone you see kicking round with a guitar was playing the Howie Morrison songs.

Robyn Park *first heard the strumming style at Wellington Teacher's Training College in 1963:* Lorraine B— used it. I could never do it but we would sneak into the music room and get out a couple of guitars and she played all the well-known Māori songs with me following, during morning tea break... stuff like 'Tahi nei taru kino'.... I don't know where she came from originally but I suspect she'd been at St. Joseph's Māori Girls College. (email 17/1/2009)

Phil Garland*, well-known local folk singer, recalled the style from 1960s Christchurch scene:* I well remember how some of my rock 'n' roll mates used to describe the Māori strum, *per-janga-jack per-janga-jack*... the great thing about this style of strum is that it somehow seems to fit almost any rhythm or song.... [...] Those memories certainly go back to the 1960s. There were a few Māori boys playing in the bands back then and I've heard it at parties and such like over the years. (emails 19/1/2009, 20/1/2009)

Russell Gillies *heard the Māori strumming style while serving in the New Zealand Army between 1975 and 1990:* In the Army we called it "*a-ringa-a-chick a-ringa-a-chick*" and from memory there weren't any songs it didn't fit, especially in the corpy's or mess late at night.... [...] Usually the Māoris played the guitar, it was just expected in those days. (emails 17/1/2009, 19/1/2009)

Nick Bollinger*, music writer and critic from Wellington who picked up the style during the 1970s:* I'm sure I heard it a lot, without identifying it, from a reasonably young age.... I went to teachers' college in the early-1980s and would sometimes go along to the kapa haka sessions there. I couldn't speak Māori, but... it was acknowledged that I knew how to play like a Māori. I was given the guitar: "You can do the Maori strum!".... I remember another time... at a party where I hardly knew anyone... a Māori guy said to me afterwards: "How did you learn to play that? Because that's what we play at parties". [A]

Carmel Russell *learned the guitar growing up in rural Taranaki in the 1980s and later moved to Wellington:* My Dad taught me what I thought was the Māori strum.... We seemed to have a guitar in the house from maybe [when I was] about ten... He knew a few chords and the family always had singalongs.... I just ended up liking the sound of it.... There's also the Ruakere side of the family, we'd go and do marae stuff with them... stay at a pā outside of New Plymouth every summer. At the end of their pā week, they'd always have... a concert at night. All the Ruakere cousins were awesome, they'd just get up, play some guitar... be amazing entertainers.... Also, I was in a kapa haka group at school... another reinforcement.

Although my findings on this topic remain impressionistic, these and other comments—together with evidence from secondary sources cited below—suggest that Māori strumming has been encountered by Pākehā in various contexts over the years, including school, parties, family and marae gatherings, popular music scenes, the army, and tertiary education. Kapa haka was a crucial context for some, but most crossovers

seem to have occurred in informal circumstances that were not strongly defined in cultural or racial terms. Moreover, some Pākehā people “grew into” the style in ways comparable to Māori experiences. Other testimony provides some oral confirmation of Chris Bourke’s hypothesis about the influence of the Gerry Merito and the Howard Morrison Quartet recordings.

This playing of the Māori guitar strumming style by Pākehā people falls into a wider pattern of music and dance crossovers in New Zealand. These include performance of haka at rugby matches (Thomas 1998b) and the singing of popular Māori songs with Western-style melodies, like ‘He pūru taitama’ (e.g., see Archer 2007). Māori guitar strumming is different from haka and Māori songs, however, by involving a non-Māori instrument popular among all New Zealanders. Guitar playing also comes without linguistic challenges, special learning protocols, or strong claims of cultural ownership. Neither explicitly nor implicitly marked as “Māori”, the style has thus readily entered the “commons” of informal music-making in New Zealand.

The Māori strumming style crossovers described by people I have talked with have also been geographically widespread, occurring in cities, provincial towns, and rural areas in various parts of New Zealand. This spread appears to have occurred in parallel with key historical events, most obviously the post-WWII Māori urban migration. In addition to the discrimination and challenges Māori migrants faced, as described in previous chapters, resettlement in cities also led to friendly contact with Pākehā at work, church, sport, and other areas (Walker 1990:198). One measure of these social overlaps was increasing rates of intermarriage. One study found that forty-two percent of Māori Aucklanders who married in 1960 took a Pākehā partner (Harré 1968). The reciprocal proportion was only 3.7 percent of Pākehā Aucklanders, though, indicating that crossover social interaction was probably much less common for the average Pākehā. Nonetheless, socialising and intermarriage would have created many opportunities for transfer of the strumming style.

Informal mingling beyond the cities may have also been also significant. During the public works boom of the 1950s and 1960s, for instance, hydroelectric, forestry, and road-building schemes attracted thousands of Māori, Pākehā, and foreign migrants to camps and settlements with vigorous social scenes (Belich 2001:315-316). Situations

conducive to crossover of the strumming style were also present in provincial towns and rural settlements, too, where Māori and Pākehā people had longer histories of coexistence. A key factor, in country and city alike, would be the general popularity of informal party singing at the time. Future research in other parts of New Zealand will help flesh out our understanding of Pākehā adoption of the style, as sketched above.

'Ten guitars'

> I have a band of men and all they do is play for me,
> They come from miles around to hear them play a melody;
> Beneath the stars the ten guitars will play a song for you,
> And if you're with the one you love, this is what you do.[5]

The 1960s popular song 'Ten guitars', already discussed in Chapter 6 as a "Māori national anthem", is also associated with these mixed Māori-Pākehā social milieux. After appearing as the B-side to English singer Engelbert Humperdinck's 1967 hit, 'Release me', the song achieved success as a New Zealand singalong item to an extent replicated nowhere else in the world (Archer 2001). As singer Dalvanius Prime observes, 'Ten guitars' was "adopted by an entire generation of Kiwis" (from Cawthorn 1996). It has since inspired countless cover versions, a television documentary (ibid.), an art installation (see Anon. 1999), and in 2011 it was officially commemorated on a postage stamp![6] According to Graham Hutchins, the song "struck a chord with mainstream Kiwis", partly because its lyrics seemed to capture the special atmosphere of 1960s parties in New Zealand:

> It became an anthem at small-town and rural parties, celebrations that took on their own flavour: a dozen DBs; someone who could play the guitar; a smattering of 'sheilas' in the shadows... a central phalanx of noisy males clustered around the roaring fire.... 'Ten guitars', Engelbert's underrated B-side, was inevitably the first song sung at gatherings. Maori and Pakeha mingled. There was something truly Kiwi about 'Ten Guitars'.... Perhaps it was the Maori strum. It seemed written specifically with New Zealand in mind... our communal, guitar-chunking, beer-swilling, mid-60s' party atmosphere.... Ten guitars were better than one or two.

[5] Words and music by Gordon Mills. Lyrics quoted from Evans (1993 [1984]).
[6] This postage stamp was part of the "Counting in Kiwi" series.

> Often Kiwi parties of the 60s featured more than one guitarist. Ten guitars appealed as a workable goal to aim for - the more guitars the merrier. (2008:217)

Hutchins' description encapsulates a nostalgic "mythology" that has grown up around 'Ten guitars' in the last forty years, the song coming to symbolise a late-1960s "golden age" of conviviality, located, pointedly enough, just before the protests and political movements of the Māori Renaissance era. In their shared enjoyment of singing 'Ten guitars', however, New Zealanders were indistinguishable from each other. Since biculturalism was established as a predominant national ideology during the 1980s, the song has been symbolically re-imagined yet again: as a "bicultural anthem" (Leonard 1999:7).

Issues of cultural crossover

"The Maori strum" is included in the 'Ten guitars' mythology outlined by Hutchins, too, suggesting that unison playing of several guitars at parties was one mechanism for its crossover transmission. However, he does not mention the racial typecasting that could apparently occur at mixed parties, where playing the guitar was assumed to be a Māori role. Some Māori people I spoke with saw this as empowering. "I'd go to parties in Christchurch... predominantly European... with a couple of my mates", Claude Hooper recalled. "Soon as we went in with a guitar... the party'd change, took a whole new genre" (interview). There could be an element of coercion involved, though. The singer Moana Maniapoto Jackson recalls her father telling her, for instance, that

> when he was going to parties with my mother, who's Pākehā... it was a very tense period for intercultural relationships and he was not made to feel welcome until there was a guitar. When he picked up the guitar and started strumming, suddenly that was his permit to get in there and that always, obviously, had mixed reactions from him. One, he was in; two, you have to do that to get in. (from Cawthorn 1996)

Interestingly, what seems to be the only song specifically about Māori guitar-playing ever released in this country, also comments on these racist undercurrents. 'Hori and his Spanish guitar', written by Willow Macky and recorded by folksinger William Clauson ([1959]), tells the story of a Māori road-worker who migrates from his rural pā to the city, where he entertains the patrons of a coffeehouse with his guitar playing.

Unfortunately, Hori ends up "in the lock-up, alone with his Spanish guitar" after a police raid (because he lacks the Pākehā resources necessary to arrange bail). Macky's ballad is virtually unknown today: it was banned from public radio for using the name "Hori" (a transliteration of "George") that had taken on derogatory overtones (Nathan 1994:41; cf. Orsman 1997:359-360), and is currently unavailable for commercial licensing.

English-language names for the *jingajik*

Various English-language names given to the *jingajik* strum over the years also contribute to an understanding of ambiguous meanings the Māori strumming style has acquired during its crossover. Those I have collected (marked with an asterisk) or found in printed sources include:

the Māori strum*	(see later in this chapter for print references)
the Shannon strum*	
the St. Jo's strum*	
the bush strum*	
the country strum*	
East Coast strum	(Armstrong 1997:95)
the Kiwi strum*	(Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2008; Anon. 2009)
the party strum*	
the fish 'n' chip strum*	
state house guitar*	
the strum*	
the normal strum*	

The most popular of these, "the Māori strum", makes a strong racial/cultural identification and will be discussed further below. Most other names, though, are less widespread—few people I talked with knew more than one or two—and have perhaps circulated only in local milieux or for brief periods. The 1950s term "the Shannon strum", for instance, was probably used mostly in the small rural town of Shannon (Brian Collins, pers. comm. 11/2011). As with the onomatopoeic terms, these names may denote stylistic variants of the *jingajik* or—such as with "the St. Jo's strum" (see Chapter 7)—other patterns. Most were probably coined through the byplay of vernacular speech, though, than reflective musical comparison.

Some names collected from Pākehā people directly connect the *jingajik* with the difficult socioeconomic conditions many Māori people have experienced. “State house guitar” (ca.1980s, Hamilton), for example, refers to the poorer housing areas where many Māori people lived during the urban migration era and afterwards, while “the fish ‘n’ chip strum” (ca.1980s, Masterton) refers to cheap takeaway food. Other terms may have arisen because of recent sensitivities about using “Māori” as an adjective, as with “Māori strum” (see more below). “Pākehā... don’t say ‘Māori strum’”, according to Jamie McCaskill, “Maybe it’s the PC [politically correct] world that we live in now, so *jingajik* is the one” (interview). Indeed, I have sometimes resorted to expressions like “the strum” when meeting potential Māori interviewees, for just this reason.

Other terms show that, as the strumming style has spread into Pākehā music-making and been passed on to new generations, it has sometimes shed an exclusively “Māori’ identity or connotations. Carmel Russell, for instance, told me she first learned the *jingajik* as “the country strum” and only realised decades later it was, in fact, also “the Māori strum” (interview). She suggested, too, that this strum was now so widely known by New Zealanders that “Kiwi strum” was equally valid and, indeed, this was one of the more common terms I encountered after “Māori strum” and the *jingajik* onomatopoeia. It also raises questions about the style’s wider diffusion: Does the strumming style now represent a genuine pan-New Zealand style? Or is “Kiwi strum” an attempt to legitimise Pākehā appropriation of this Māori musical feature?

As with so much else concerning the Māori strumming style, published discourse about such issues is negligible. Māori people I spoke with viewed the style’s crossover to Pākehā in various ways. Most were agreed that it had not been quantitatively very significant. Consequently, Ray Isaacs wondered whether Pākehā New Zealanders were not missing an opportunity to share in Māori culture in the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi: “It’s part of us that we want to share with our European brothers and sisters... Pākehā, take our Māori songs... our Māori culture... our *jungajuk*... let’s promote our culture” (interview). Others suggested, though, that when Pākehā played the style something fundamental seemed “missing”. “I don’t know what it is”, Jamie McCaskill told me, “the way our bodies move differently or the way we think is different”

(interview). If the Māori strumming style achieves more formal recognition in future, questions of cultural authenticity may well inspire more debate.

But whatever their connotations and implications, the sheer abundance of the English-language names I have collected for the *jingajik* is, again, striking in itself. As with the onomatopoeia, their profusion reveals the style's general diffusion and how it has remained open to vernacular identification. That the strumming style has not been wholly fixed down as "Māori" (even if this remains the most common association) has been a key factor. Instead, as it has passed through different milieux—Māori, Pākehā, mixed—people have felt at liberty to make their own associations based on different assumptions, attitudes, or humorous impulses.

Other New Zealand music recordings

The Māori strumming style's diffusion nationally is further evidenced by its presence on recordings by non-Māori New Zealand groups and artists; or mixed groups. Again, the actual extent of this presence is difficult to gauge due to the potentially huge quantity of relevant material. The survey below, therefore, concentrates on two areas: recordings of Māori material by non-Māori performers; and popular music recordings where the style's use has been noted in reviews, articles, books, or interviews. In the latter cases, the surrounding discussions also provide insights into how the style has been perceived, after having "[escaped] from the vernacular and become part of the mass culture" (Lantis 1960:204). As we will see, the Māori strumming style has been met with a mixture of affection and depreciation that is in itself revealing.

The early recording history of Māori strumming by non-Māori musicians is somewhat unclear, again due to the similarities with strumming on 1950s "South Seas" recordings (see above). Several Pākehā guitarists featured on these 1950s records, most notably Johnny Bradfield, an accomplished jazz musician with Māori family connections who later accompanied the Maniapoto Voices (Gifford 2007). Recordings of Māori cultural material thus provide more definitive starting points, including two instrumental records by Pākehā guitarist Peter Posa, *Tiki Tunes* ([1963]) and *Māori Melodies on Guitar* ([1965]), which feature melodic lead guitar over bass, drums, and lightly-amplified

strumming in the restrained mode of the Māori "pop" groups already discussed; Posa also played backing for The Apaapa Sisters [1962?].[7]

Popular music recordings explicitly identified with Māori guitar strumming date back to the mid-1970s, with one early example being the track 'Spellbound' from Split Enz' debut LP *Mental Notes* (2006 [1975]). According to drummer Geoff Chunn, this track makes guitarist Phil Judd responsible for "the first Māori strum played by a white boy... the classic *jung-jucka-juk*" (from Sheridan and Brown 1993). While containing the ingredients that allow it to be identified with the Māori style, Judd's strumming is unusually frenetic, thus giving it a distinctive flavour suited to the Split Enz' art-rock aesthetic. Rock group Hello Sailor's self-titled debut LP (1977) has also been found to contain "Māori strums", with critic Nick Bollinger describing the trebly electric-guitar introduction to 'Gutter black', before the track switches to a reggae rhythm, as a "Maori strum" (2009:79). An acoustic *jingajik* also runs beneath the "South Seas" parody, 'Lyin' in the sand', alongside swooning steel guitar. "It's got the classic party strum", songwriter Harry Lyon recently affirmed.[8] (See Figure 15 for transcriptions of the 'Gutter black' intro and 'Spellbound' strums.)

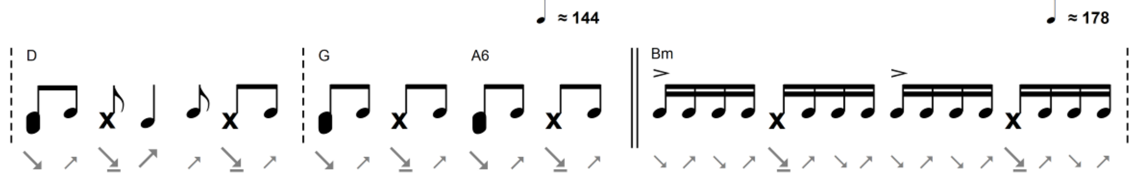

Figure 15: **'Gutter black' and 'Spellbound' strums**

"Māori strums" also feature on popular recordings through the 1980s. According to a former member of the Wellington reggae-funk band The Pelicans, for example, the *jingajik* is deliberately quoted in the intro to their song 'Banana Dominion' (1983):

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[7] Interestingly, there are also some suggestions of the Māori strumming style—played on ukulele—on the *Bush Singalong* LP (Cleveland et al. [1963]) discussed in Chapter 5. This is most pronounced during the opening for 'Anna Hooch' (see CD6:2.20-2.35), a song about a love affair between a bushman and "a dusky maiden", where the style was probably deliberately employed for its Māori associations.

[8] Harry Lyon, interview with Chris Bourke, 31/10/2011. Thanks to Chris Bourke for permission to use this quotation.

Nick Bollinger: It was almost a musical image... to say, "Hey, here we are in New Zealand". Or perhaps even more specifically Porirua or somewhere like that. Then the song starts off with [lyrics about] people in overcrowded housing living by the motorway. [B]

However, the most celebrated usages of the Māori strumming style in New Zealand popular music have been those by the band Crowded House. Their 1987 single 'Don't dream it's over', for instance, whose international success was noted at the start of the chapter, is based around by a slow loping strum on electric guitar, later identified by songwriter Neil Finn as "a classic Maori strum". He also noted "there's been a lot of them" in the group's repertoire (quoted in McCabe 1995:D2), with another obvious example being the title track of the album *Together Alone* (1993). Other Crowded House studio recordings feature strumming accompaniment, too, although it is often hard to definitively identify this with the Māori style. The "classic Maori strum" on the 1991 single 'Weather with you', for example, which Finn also singles out (cf. Webb 2003), only really becomes obvious in live acoustic renditions. Here, as elsewhere, a bass-drums arrangement tends to displace or conceal key elements. (See Figure 16 for transcriptions of the 'Don't dream it's over' and 'Together alone' strums.)

Figure 16: **'Don't dream it's over' and 'Together alone' strum**

'Don't dream it's over' from Neil Finn's demonstration in Cawthorn 1996

Comments by such Pākehā musicians indicate that they typically learned the Māori strumming style through informal music-making. Neil Finn and his brother Tim (founder of Split Enz and sometime member of Crowded House) apparently acquired it growing up. "That influence has always been there", Neil observes. "It's deep as hell from childhood because that's the way that we learnt how to play guitar and heard people play guitars around us". Tim adds: "It's parties, singing at parties" (quoted in McCabe 1995:D2; cf. Bourke 1997:346). The Finn brothers were raised in Te Awamutu, a small provincial town, one of the potential sites for Māori-Pākehā strumming style crossover mentioned above. But it is also interesting that the popular

recordings on which "Māori strums" have been previously identified only date from the mid-1970s onwards. Perhaps the style only began to seep into the broader field of New Zealand popular music once Pākehā who had grown up during the 1950s-1960s—a period of increasing social contact between Māori and Pākehā—came of age and formed bands.

Another group to prominently employ the Māori strumming style is the mid-1990s "urban soul" duo OMC, comprising Niuean/Māori singer Pauly Fuemana and Pākehā producer Alan Jansson. Jansson had previously experimented with acoustic-strumming/drum-loop combinations on the compilation, *Proud* (Various Artists 1994). This sound was then showcased on OMC's 1995 debut single 'How Bizarre'—described by Nick Bollinger, again, as having "at its core, nothing more than a bro singing to the Maori strum" (1996)—a track that topped single charts around the world. OMC's subsequent album, *How Bizarre* (1996), featuring other tracks with guitar backing, sold three to four million copies, apparently the best-selling New Zealand record of all time (Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2008). Victor Stent, an industry figure connected with the group, later told *Billboard* magazine that the OMC sound had much greater commercial potential:

> New Zealand has a real opportunity, like Jamaica did with reggae, to establish a new music form. It's a combination of the Maori three-chord strum and the lovely, untutored harmonies that Polynesians use. If we can harness that with an innate pop consciousness, I think it could be huge. (quoted Ferguson 2002:45)

Unfortunately, OMC had already disbanded by this stage and subsequent use of the formula identified by Stent seems to have been minimal. Some Māori recording artists may have possibly resisted usage of the strumming style. Tony Mitchell, for example, notes that groups on the *Proud* CD were unhappy about Pākehā producers pursuing a "strictly Polynesian musical agenda" represented by guitar and ukulele backing (1996:255). The OMC recipe subsequently seems to have had greater subsequent impact on New Zealand-based "Pasifika" artists like King Kapisi (cf. Zemke 2011:105).

The Māori guitar strumming style, then, has surfaced in the wider field of New Zealand popular music on various occasions, including on several of the country's most iconic and commercially-successful records. Together with the Māori music recordings, these

represent a far greater "escape" from the vernacular into mass culture than seen, for example, with the tramping song record, *Bush Singalong* (see Chapter 5) and further support the claim that the Māori strumming style has been the most influential guitar style to yet emerge in New Zealand. The recordings also find the style being transformed to suit art-rock, rock, and "urban soul" settings, thus revealing its potential for creative adaptation. Yet given the seemingly quite wide grassroots diffusion of the style, the popular music crossover has been not nearly so extensive as might be expected, limited to barely a dozen or so examples (granted that more unidentified cases may exist). This disjuncture may have arisen partly for technical reasons—e.g., the concealing effect of rock arrangements—but other explanations are suggested by the published critical discourses surrounding the examples noted above (and others).

Whenever critics, journalists, writers, and musicians have recognised a "Māori strum", it has usually been regarded positively for its local associations. Nick Bollinger, for example, claims that the acoustic strum on 'How bizarre' conjures a powerful sense of "place": "To Kiwi ears, this music could be from one place only. It all revolves around the acoustic strum that has graced 10,000 versions of 'Ten Guitars'" (Bollinger 1996). The strum in 'Don't dream it's over', too, has evoked a pungent sense of home for some New Zealanders (e.g., Ryan 2008:11). Sally Bodkin-Allen has recently asserted that Māori strumming does seem to have become "a distinctive sound associated with New Zealand" (2011:70).

Significantly, though, such perceptions have only been voiced by a small handful of commentators, only since the mid-1990s, and usually retrospectively, looking back at older recordings, as if their "Māori strums" had gone unnoticed for many years. Neil Finn himself apparently had a delayed realisation: "Our most successful moments have been with that", he noted in 1995. "I guess it's dawned on us a bit late" (quoted in McCabe 1995:D2). Indeed, aside from cases like 'Banana Dominion' and 'How Bizarre', the style seems to have entered popular music principally as a "grown into" technique rather than being deliberately employed as a marker of "local" identity.

Furthermore, use of the Māori strumming style in popular music seems to have sometimes been discouraged by conflicting musical values. Bands seeking to emulate overseas genres, for instance, have occasionally found the style distractingly "local". A

member of 1980s Hamilton punk band, The Creepy Crawlies, recalled the band's Māori guitarists occasionally teasing other members by playing "state house guitar" before reverting to the desired punk style (Bryce Galloway, pers. comm. 24/4/2011). Matthew Bannister's memoir of the 1980s "Dunedin scene" based around independent label Flying Nun describes a different clash of expectations. Bannister's band Sneaky Feelings were at a recording session for the seminal compilation, "Dunedin Double" (The Chills et al. 1982):

> Chris [Knox], Doug [Hood] and the tape recorder were in the front room, while the band was in one of the side bedrooms.... Then we did 'There's a Chance', which to me sounded the best, that is, the most commercial, of all our songs. Everyone in the control room hated it. 'Got a bit of a Maori strum,' Chris said. (1999:54-55)

The final version of this track only vaguely conveys "a Maori strum" and it is not clear, in any case, why Knox, a key figure in a scene that celebrated self-taught musicianship, would find this problematic. Perhaps the strumming style jarred with his desire for Flying Nun bands to develop their own "alternative" local sound: he would not have wanted them to sound "Māori" any more than like mainstream New Zealand groups. As Nick Bollinger speculated:

Nick Bollinger: Perhaps... it has these associations: it's a bit hick, it's a bit corny... sort of touristy... things that people in New Zealand who are trying to show that they're really sophisticated and part of the bigger world, they don't want to be seen as any of those things. Your Flying Nun jangly guitar, which references The Byrds and The Velvet Underground... was really seen as a mark of hipness, of a certain sophistication, of being part of a fairly elite kind of world. Now that party singalong thing has never been seen like that. It's never going to be an elite thing because it's basically something that just about anyone can do! It's an inclusive thing... a communal thing... a functional thing. [B]

The unfavourable comments which I occasionally heard from other Pākehā musicians partly confirm Bollinger's idea. Some deemed the style, still with a certain affection, as "terrible" and "lazy", or as "the default New Zealand strum". The term "fish 'n' chip strum", according to my informant, apparently connoted "stink playing, like you couldn't play the guitar properly" (i.e. in a schooled or standard manner). Another admitted they found the Māori strumming style "monotonous" (cf. Du Fresne 1995).

Similar aesthetic judgements may also be responsible for the strumming style having had little discernible influence on New Zealand art music either. A brief guitar-strumming section in the 1984 opera *Waituhi* by Ross Harris (music) and Witi Ihimaera (libretto), is the sole example I have traced, although apparently even this was the Māori performer's own interpretation of chords that were scored quite differently (Ross Harris, pers. comm. 18/2/2009). Composers, where they had sought inspiration from Māori music, have by contrast mainly turned to higher-status traditional culture as represented by waiata and taonga pūoro.

Some possibilities exist, then, that the Māori strumming style has been consciously avoided on New Zealand popular recordings and possibly in art music composition, despite its growing recognition as a distinctive sound of informal music-making in New Zealand. Whether for its strong local associations or homely primitiveness, such rejections are perhaps a predictable response to the vernacular in a society like New Zealand that is crisscrossed with hieratic cultural values—whether arising from the imperatives of avant-garde composition or "alternative" popular music. Mostly, though, the Māori strumming style seems to have been simply overlooked, only "escaping" into popular music as a taken-for-granted technique acquired by certain musicians. Another possibility, that Pākehā may have felt intimidated by potential accusations of cultural appropriation, is discussed below.

"Māori strum"

The term "Māori strum" provides conclusive evidence for the Māori guitar strumming style's widespread diffusion into New Zealand society. This expression—by far the most common for the *jingajik*—shows that an awareness of the Māori style has now become enshrined in New Zealand English. "Māori strum", then, according to Charles Keil's theory of style formation, would seem to be the pivotal "declaration of consolidation" around this style (Keil and Feld 1994:209). As it happens, though, this point of greatest linguistic consolidation is also that of greatest ambivalence. As noted already, "Māori strum" is a term regarded with discomfort by some, even being consciously avoided, with the many alternative names also suggesting its legitimacy is unclear.

In many respects, this lack of linguistic consolidation matches the overall scarcity of cultural, critical, commercial, and artistic consolidation around the Māori strumming style mapped out across this case study. "Māori strum" thus returns us to a basic question: why has this guitar style been so taken for granted in New Zealand despite being performed and developed *for over seventy years*? Here is a musical style which seemingly contradicts Keil's theory by having both prospered and yet remained somehow culturally subliminal. This section, through investigating the term "Māori strum" and related stereotypes of Māori musicality, attempts to explain this state of affairs as the product of a stalled negotiation between Māori and Pākehā over the style's cultural value, with its vernacular basis proving the central factor.

"Māori strum" seems to be of relatively recent coinage. It is not found in Harry Orsman's *Dictionary of New Zealand English* (1997), for instance, while the New Zealand Dictionary Centre (NZDC) has accumulated a few citations dating back only to the mid-1990s (see McCabe 1995; Bollinger 1996; Amery 2000). Many more examples can be cited from the 2000s,[9] with the term only recently appearing in an actual New Zealand dictionary (McGill [2011]:114). The earliest print citation I have traced extends the NZDC's coverage back only a little further (Clarke 1988:2), while interviewees have generally dated its spoken usage to the late-1970s at the earliest. Although older examples may yet be discovered, it seems likely that "Māori strum" was coined in the 1970s, a timeframe that helps explain why the "Māori strums" on recordings like Split Enz's 'Spellbound' (1975) have only been identified retrospectively: the term may not have even existed at the time.

The term "Māori strum" identifies a distinctive way of strumming the guitar as "Māori". Given that this style is firmly embedded in several fields of Māori music-making and is probably mostly played in New Zealand by Māori people, "Māori strum" may seem a fairly neutral and straightforward term. It is loaded with multiple meanings, however. First, "Māori strum" can designate at least three different objects. Most commonly, it means "*the* Māori strum": the *jingajik*. Less frequently, a strum pattern is denoted as "*a* Māori strum". Third, and least frequently, it signifies the entire strumming style: "Māori strum" is a Māori way of strumming the guitar. (Some usages can also be interpreted in

[9] Various printed usages of "Māori strum" have already been referenced in Chapters 6-8. For others, see Bourke 1997:76; Davies 2001; Fea 2002; Morgan 2008:41; Howe 2008; Sweetman 2009, 2011.

several ways.) These emphases partly reflect the *jingajik*'s popularity, but they also pertain to the main group of people who use the term.

"Māori strum" seems to be mainly employed by non-Māori New Zealanders. Every Māori person I asked knew the term, but usually observed that it conveyed an outsider perspective and was seldom used among Māori. "People in my circles don't use 'Māori strum', I suppose because we're all Māori", was a typical comment. "Why would you say, 'do the Māori strum'?" ("David", interview) Moreover, almost every print usage between 1988 and 2011 was made by or quoted from Pākehā. One could conclude, then, that Pākehā probably coined the term in the late-urban migration period due to increasing awareness of a pan-Māori guitar style. The term's predominant application to the *jingajik* suggests, too, that Pākehā people have tended to perceive the Māori strumming style as a single strum than a full-fledged style, perhaps because parties rather than kapa haka have been the principal area of interracial contact.

Many Pākehā people I conversed with during my research freely used "Māori strum", but some were hesitant. Several jokingly asked: "am I allowed to say that?" In print, too, the term is often enclosed in quotation marks or with a hedging qualification—like "the *affectionately titled* 'Maori strum'" (Small 2003, italics added)—emphasising a positive meaning. These reactions reflect a general caution taken by many Pākehā when using "Māori" as an adjective, a trend that dates from the Māori Renaissance. Previously, "Māori" was used in numerous expressions, some neutral and still acceptable—for example, rēwena bread being referred to as "Māori bread"—and others that stem from derogatory stereotypes of Māori people as lazy, self-indulgent, and unrefined, including "Māori holiday" (the day after payday) and "Māori car" (a decrepit vehicle); it was also used to describe anything perceived as "inferior or 'uncivilized' in construction, appearance or style" (Orsman 1997:471). Although Māori themselves may occasionally employ such language for self-deprecating humour, it is most obviously the product of racist attitudes among Pākehā New Zealanders and became subject to increasing public complaints in the 1970s. This racist-language legacy probably renders terms like "Māori strum" ambiguous, then, even when they are used without derogatory intent. Furthermore, that Māori people use "Māori strum" infrequently themselves may have made Pākehā who are alert to such matters even more uncertain about its legitimacy.

None of the Māori people I interviewed seemed to consider “Māori strum” manifestly disparaging, but several had reservations. Some viewed it as positive in one sense—“what you’re really saying is that Māoris can play the guitar”—and yet also reductive, as if the *jingajik* was the only Māori guitar style. Michael Priest found “Māori strum” ambiguous in another way: did it denote any Māori person’s strumming or some natural “Māori” method? “Because I’m not sure if I’m playing it myself”, he wryly added (interview B). The term thus carries a hint of racial determinism that, by implication, denies the individual agency of the guitarist.

Such reservations around the term “Māori strum” are also related to other racial stereotypes. Michael Priest, for instance, compared the idea of “Māori strum” to “the belief that every Māori can play the guitar”. This in turn reflects a longstanding belief that Māori are “naturally” musical—or at least more so than Pākehā. A 1970 survey of racial perceptions among New Zealand college students, for example, found that “singing and guitar playing” was the most commonly chosen Māori stereotype (Archer and Archer 1970). Of course, such stereotypes partly reflect the actual popularity of music-making among Māori people (Metge 1976:282). The notion of a “natural” musicality was also endorsed by a number of Māori people I interviewed as true to their experience (and perhaps representing a kind of empowering “strategic essentialism”: cf. Landry and MacLean 1996:214). The guitar itself remains a self-selected symbol of the warmth of Māori whānau life (see Plate 33). But in the context of European colonialist thinking, which still underpins racist Pākehā attitudes to some extent, the idea of a “natural” musicality conjures up an image of Māori as close to nature, as “primitive” yet gifted enough to justify a “civilizing” mission (Ballara 1986). Beliefs like “every Māori can play the guitar” thus smack of condescension and Māori people may understandably resent them. Another stereotype, linked directly to the strumming style’s party usages, is that of the “happy-go-lucky” Māori (second most prevalent in the 1970 survey cited above). Various Māori individuals, including a government minister, have targeted the “happy-go-lucky bloke strumming a guitar” stereotype as an anachronism in the post-Renaissance era, for implying that Māori are mainly interested in socialising and have limited cultural aspirations (see *The Dominion*, 17/7/1998, p.2; Vasil 1990:31; Daniels 1998).

Plate 33: **Māori Television billboard, 2011**

Michael Brown

An array of double-edged expressions and stereotypes thus hover around the term "Māori strum", investing it with a precarious ambiguity and helping explain the Māori strumming style's taken-for-granted status in New Zealand music culture. To better grasp this point, we must revisit Charles Keil's theory that musical styles in class societies are sites of negotiation between the subordinated groups who create them and the dominant culture that appropriates them (Keil and Feld 1994:197-217). In having helped Māori people in Pākehā-dominated New Zealand "keep control of their social identities in music", by establishing a hegemony of collective happiness and aroha at parties as well as supporting the evolution of Māori cultural performance, the Māori strumming style satisfies Keil's conception (202). The style has endured for many decades, too, diffusing into the dominant Pākehā culture. Somewhat inexplicably, though, it remains conceptually unconsolidated. The reasons for this seem to indicate that another clause in Keil's argument, namely that for styles "to grow and prosper, the dominant culture's stereotypes must be accepted and transcended" (206), has not been fulfilled.

The crucial factor seems to be the Māori strumming style's vernacular basis. As we have seen, the style's simplicity and self-taught homeliness have sometimes (though not always) worked to devalue it in Pākehā music-making. Refracted through prevailing Western musical values, it has thus become aligned with negative Pākehā stereotypes.

The style's qualities have become open to interpretation as "monotonous", "lazy", and "can't play properly", assessments that echo racist perceptions of things "Māori" as "inferior or 'uncivilized'" (Orsman 1997:471). Furthermore, the style's accessibility and capacity for generating party happiness have supported patronising notions of Māori as "naturally" musical and "happy-go-lucky". Even the term "the Māori strum" can have a reductive, demeaning ring. It is entirely comprehensible, then, that while Māori have cherished this guitar style on their own terms, they might have been ambivalent about turning it into "Māori identity" in the broader New Zealand context. Unambiguously-positive alternatives like the "concert party" and "showband" have, significantly, also been available. More recently, Māori have embraced a "performing arts" paradigm which bestows a sense of value upon kapa haka equivalent to Pākehā high culture.

At the same time, the strumming style's vernacular basis has caused it to prosper at a grassroots level, allowing it to be easily transmitted and adapted to different musical settings. Furthermore, because Māori ownership of the style has not been strongly asserted, it has freely spread into Pākehā milieux and acquired new identities in the process. Yet the style's abiding Māori associations may have also inhibited Pākehā from utilising or celebrating it: most crossovers into popular music seem to be accidental "leakages". With the Māori Renaissance and advent of biculturalism in the 1980s—during which Pākehā appropriation of Māori culture began to be criticised (see Shand 2002)—such sensitivities have probably only intensified for Pākehā musicians.

The Māori guitar strumming style has thus been stalled in a curious cultural "limbo", with seemingly neither Māori nor Pākehā wholeheartedly embracing it as the other watches on. This lack of recognition can be contrasted with that given to the jointly-appropriated overseas song: 'Ten guitars'. In a sense, the strumming style memorialises a moment that occurred sixty or seventy years ago when acoustic guitars first arrived en masse in New Zealand, after which it has been caught—an ambiguous signifier in an ongoing cultural negotiation.

Two factors, therefore, seem to account for the divergence of the Māori strumming style from Keil's style-formation narrative. First, the subordinate-dominant culture relationship in New Zealand society differs considerably from the American examples Keil draws from. While having been subjugated in various ways, Māori have still been

in a position to more freely choose how to construct "Māori identity", in a way that African-Americans, for example, have not. Second, Keil does not consider the possibility that "classless" musical styles—those with a radically-inclusive vernacular basis—might still prosper in class societies. The Māori guitar strumming style, for instance, although having hegemonic thrust, involves relatively few correlates of cultural hierarchy (e.g., musical specialisation, incentives toward virtuosity). It allows anybody to pick up a guitar and become their own stylist—although, of course, as we have seen, such styles are still subject to valuation according to the cultural priorities of the wider society.

The question remains, however, as to why the Māori strumming style has been neglected in New Zealand music studies for so many decades. While the romantic-nationalist project of the folk music collectors has generally excluded Māori material, popular music studies have probably not been orientated to consider the influence of informal styles on popular music (see Chapter 2) or else have succumbed to assumptions that have elsewhere depreciated the style. Māori music studies and ethnomusicology, meanwhile, have long prioritised the recovery of traditional Māori forms over studying modern styles. Recent ethnographic approaches may have encouraged a tendency, too, as identified by Mervyn McLean, of "[supposing] that anything not named or conceptualized by the practitioners must be unimportant and can therefore be ignored" (2007:137). Ultimately, though, if the Māori strumming guitar style was ornate, virtuosic, or involved special tunings, for instance, one imagines that it would not have been ignored by ethnomusicologists. Perhaps homeliness and universal accessibility—the style being a functional accompaniment using standard acoustic guitars based on the elementary technique of strumming—are qualities as much undervalued in ethnomusicology, as in the study of popular music and folk music.

Nonetheless, the Māori guitar strumming style is probably the most popular and enduring guitar style to have yet emerged in New Zealand and, as such, holds considerable interest. It reveals much about the importance of informal music in Māori social milieux, reflecting vividly on the social history of the urban migration and its aftermath. The style provides a unique way of understanding the modern evolution and traditional inspirations of kapa haka, as well as the variously amicable, vexed, and always dynamic relationship between Māori and Pākehā: an entire cultural history

seems compacted into the term “Māori strum”. It raises the tantalising possibility that other—as yet unrecognised—instrumental music styles may have also been developed here. Lastly, the Māori guitar strumming style provides a compelling image of the vernacular in New Zealand music.

Conclusion

The Māori guitar strumming style presents an image of the vernacular as closely entwined with an instrumental style performed in various musical practices and communities, both in the Wellington region—where this ethnography has been centred—and New Zealand more broadly. One sign of the style’s general vernacular basis has been its taken-for-granted status in public discourse. It would seem to have been just “there” in New Zealand life, hiding in plain sight for over seventy years, recognised by myriad jokey terms for a simple variant, the *jingajik*, yet accorded little serious attention. On evidence I have gathered in the Wellington region, the style’s vernacular basis is secured by its accessibility and self-taught character, which enables musicians and self-identified “non-guitarists” alike to pick up a standard acoustic guitar and become their own stylists. The style’s popularity is closely linked to its supreme functionality as a group-singing accompaniment. Harmony, rhythm, and texture are fused into a combination that can guide party singalongs and kapa haka groups alike. The style turns a single acoustic guitar into a self-sufficient ensemble: the heartbeat of a singing throng.

The style’s vernacular basis is also signalled by an absence of stories or myths of origin in public discourse and among those I have talked with. Most probably, it began being performed by Māori musicians during the 1930s, amid an influx of acoustic guitars and popular styles into New Zealand, being developed and transmitted thereafter within various strands of music-making. Guitar accompaniment in this style has provided sympathetic support in Māori cultural performance from the 1940s onwards, for instance, where it can be registered alongside other innovations which have enabled Māori to sustain their cultural identity in the face of the dominant Pākehā culture. My fieldwork with Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club in Wellington showed that although the style was realised here in an appropriately disciplined form, it was still rooted in the vernacular. Meanwhile, the style has also flourished at parties, where its usage helps

generate a hegemony of collective happiness and aroha, a function of perhaps critical importance during the 1950s-1970s urban migration. Overall, it can be seen to have helped Māori people "keep control of their social identities in music" (Keil and Feld 1994:202) during a struggle to withstand and adjust to the legacy of British colonisation. The vernacular—which makes the style accessible and self-shaped—would appear to have been crucial in the process.

The Māori guitar strumming style has reached the ears of other New Zealanders, too, both in the Wellington region and more widely, through live performance and music recordings. Slowly diffusing through various shared milieux, it has been picked up by some Pākehā, nicknamed, and used on iconic popular recordings. The style's reception in public discourse has been mixed, though, including both acclaim (to the extent of being a tag to identify the New Zealand homeland) and affectionate depreciation. A certain strand of Pākehā ambivalence about the style's musical value—which inadvertently aligns it with certain disagreeable Māori stereotypes—ultimately seems to have hindered its championing by Māori as "Māori" in the wider New Zealand arena, with Pākehā musicians themselves also seeming reluctant to stage open appropriations. The strumming style thus appears to have been held in a kind of cultural stasis, staying publically unacknowledged for decades.

The history of the Māori guitar strumming style is not so "rounded off" as with tramping club singsongs. Its supreme functionality will ensure continued use for the foreseeable future, while Māori and Pākehā may yet commence a fresh cultural renegotiation. This case study has been its own kind of revaluation. My argument, however, has been that the homeliness, accessibility, and generative properties of the vernacular can be appreciated in their own right. This will be one theme of the thesis Conclusion that follows.

Conclusion

This thesis has presented two ethnographies of New Zealand music, relating to tramping club singsongs and the Māori guitar strumming style respectively. The initial motivation for the overall inquiry was the perception—based on a previous study of folk music collecting in New Zealand (Brown 2006)—that such musical topics had effectively been excluded from musicological consideration in New Zealand because they fell outside the normal purview of scholarly research. To better perceive their existence, understand their qualities, explain their neglect in music discourse, and appreciate their value, the thesis has engaged the alternative concept of "vernacular", which refers to an informal approach to music-making available to everybody. Each ethnography has used an overall research framework and methodology developed for this task. Although not all aspects of past music-making could be recovered or contemporary areas explored, a clear picture emerged in each case.

The two studies have dealt with music-making where the vernacular was an obvious component, showing it operating in different performance settings, social and cultural contexts, and across overlapping historical periods. Both ethnographies concentrated on examples from the Wellington region, although the subject matter has evident national dimensions. They can be summarised as follows:

1. *Tramping club singsongs*, a medium of informal self-entertainment that flourished among New Zealand wilderness recreationists in the mid-twentieth century. The ethnography concentrated on the mainly-Pākehā Wellington tramping scene and two clubs based around this interest, namely the Tararua Tramping Club and Victoria University Tramping Club. In both clubs, singsongs complemented social life and mountain experiences, and each developed their own singsong idiocultures with different repertoire mixtures, performance features, and songwriters. Singsongs thrived particularly during the 1940s-1960s era due to a conjunction of factors that made tramping itself more appealing: new opportunities to access the hills, the camaraderie and constructive spirit of the clubs, the opportunities for relaxed socialising between young men and

women, and as a way of managing urban conformity in post-WWII life. Tramping singsongs were a distinctive informal music culture of New Zealand.

2. *The Māori guitar strumming style*, an easily self-taught and versatile accompaniment style used widely in Māori music, which has crossed over to some extent into Pākehā music. Although its origins and provenance are unclear at present, the style probably began being performed by Māori musicians during the 1930s. Research conducted in the Wellington region pointed to the style's longstanding popularity for party singalongs and supported the idea that it had special significance during the 1950s-1970s Māori urban migration era. The style has also been used for instrumental accompaniment in Māori cultural performance (kapa haka) for many decades and fieldwork with the Wellington kapa haka group, Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club, revealed its special utility in this context. The style is heard on some iconic New Zealand music recordings and has had some recognition as a distinctive local sound. The Māori strumming style is probably the most popular and enduring guitar style to have yet emerged in New Zealand.

In each case study, the vernacular was manifest in music-making that could be described as inclusive and accessible. Tramping singsongs were open to all, while the Māori guitar strumming style was not confined to adept instrumentalists or even players who could name chords. Such music-making discards strong performer/audience separations and musician/non-musician distinctions, revealing the vernacular in music-making, as with spoken language, to be universally available.

The vernacular was seen to be readily at hand in each case. Informality was implicit at tramping singsongs and guitar parties, with additional supporting factors including a sense of *communitas*, comfortingly-dim lighting, and alcohol consumption. Once people felt sufficiently "at home", they relaxed into the vernacular mode. That music-making was often integrated with another activity—wilderness recreation or socialising—rather than being a stand-alone "music" practice, also helped. Furthermore, knowing that "musical" expectations were secondary to other goals helped persuade people to participate in a relaxed way—it contributed to musical events becoming vernacular domains.

Such music-making, however, was supported by a wider musical context. Group singing at home, school, church, and social events were commonly experienced in Pākehā life in the mid-twentieth century period, with instruments like pianos and guitars being widely played; a similar musical backdrop seems to have operated in Māori life through to the present. Most people were thus familiar with musical participation, had a shared repertoire, and were acquainted with some basic creative procedures. As demonstrated in the ethnographies, this backdrop provided raw materials and competencies with which the vernacular could operate.

The vernacular was a powerful transformative agent. By taking an informal approach, people brought together repertoires from eclectic sources, adapted, rearranged, and parodied songs, and devised accompaniments. Changes often occurred spontaneously in performance, by way of involuntary variations, conscious embellishments and improvisations. Certain individuals made special contributions and enjoyed manifest vernacular agency as a result—through being a guitarist, for instance, or a tramping club parodist—yet the overall process had a responsorial, collective feel. As a result, the music was often identifiably raw, rough, or makeshift.

Such qualities, however, demonstrated the latitude by which people customised their music-making. The hodgepodge repertories of the two tramping clubs, for instance, actually came to reflect the uniquely-mingled interests of specific communities. Characteristic instrumental styles, vocal tones and textures, performance features and practices, the meanings accruing to particular songs, the themes and content of parodies and ballads: all helped express shared values and identities. The vernacular domain was also a place where individuals could "grow into" their own individual styles. Such customised music-making became fitted to people's deeper needs, too, whether for fulfilling realities and social relationships (tramping singsongs), or to sustain social values and cultural identities (Māori guitar strumming style). Products of the music-making could be popular and lasting, but the vernacular provided the looseness that enabled people to keep making and remaking music "their own".

Naming was revealed to be a crucial aspect of the overall making-our-own process, highlighting key musical features, shared social values, and the newness of what was

identified. Names were homemade stamps of ownership. Interpretations by participants—whether through names, community commentary, or visual representations—could themselves have a vernacular humorous tone that suited the informal music-making stance. It could have a self-deprecating quality, too, indicating awareness of music-making's departure from cultural standards promoted in the wider society.

The vernacular in music-making has also been seen to exist in a dynamic relationship with other musical processes and values. Learning kapa haka guitar accompaniment at Ngāti Pōneke, for instance, showed that the Māori guitar strumming style was still rooted in the vernacular here, but that expectations of competition and public performance saw individual strumming idiolects become increasingly refined and disciplined with the result that, eventually, the vernacular was subsumed by other performance values. Similarly, the extension of tramping songs deriving from Tararua Tramping Club sources into popular music, in the form of the 1963 LP *Bush Singalong*, involved processes—such as censorship, studio polishing, and intensification of genre markers—more orientated to institutionalised state, cultural, and commercial values.

While both ethnographies focused on the Wellington region, each also noticed how the vernacular in local music-making was extended into or mirrored in the national music culture. Some evidence—tramping song books from around New Zealand, for instance, and LPs and televised broadcasts of Māori cultural performance—suggested that the vernacular may be a common ingredient with such music-making elsewhere (although further studies are needed to flesh out the broader picture). Critical reception of these musical topics in newspapers, magazines, and such like, was also revealing. Although sometimes appreciative of its "local" flavours, public discourse could also depreciate music-making of the vernacular domain as crude or trivial, and seemingly peripheral to dominant music-culture values. Indeed, while the subject matter investigated in the ethnographies does seem to have influenced New Zealand popular music in certain ways, this influence has been largely unacknowledged. Almost nothing of the subject matter seems to have been appropriated into art music composition.

Significantly, though, the very dynamism of the vernacular could at times also work to undermine its own existence or wider recognition. The studies showed that the gestures

of informal music-making may embody remarkable ambivalence. What was casually made could later be thrown away, when it no longer worked or was no longer needed; music styles so taken-for-granted could lie hidden in plain sight for years.

There had previously been little musicological inquiry into the ethnography topics, either regionally or nationally, despite a roundabout "search for the vernacular" in New Zealand music going on for many decades. In each case, the lack of prioritisation within the envelope of research possibilities seemed to be due to various factors. Generally, though, the influence of the vernacular—and its attendant makeshift processes, ephemeral products, lack of performer/audience separations or musician/non-musician distinctions, and taken-for-granted commonness—inadvertently placed the music-making on the outer margins of the scope of inquiry in sub-disciplines like New Zealand folk music, popular music and Māori music studies. The vernacular consigned such topics to being scholarly *parerga* (Batchen 2000).

By making "vernacular" a conceptual centre of inquiry, however, these subjects have come clearly into focus and been shown to have considerable potential significance. While other theoretical perspectives on this music-making would be beneficial, this thesis has established the topics' claim to have a permanent place in the general historiography of New Zealand music. They have shown "vernacular" to be a valuable and workable concept: a route worth taking in the ongoing study of New Zealand music.

Moreover, the combination of ethnographies could serve to challenge some previous broad assumptions in New Zealand music studies. First, by suggesting that the vernacular blossoms where music-making is relatively unconstrained by institutionalised "musical" values—enabling it to become highly responsive to the needs of people generally, their community life, and experiences of major historical events—the studies call into question the current predominance of research into "musicians' music". They plead for much greater pluralism in local music historiography. Second, they show that the vernacular can be considered an influence on New Zealand popular music and an ingredient in Māori music, even if such influence is not formally recognised. (And while neither ethnography revealed much impact on New Zealand art music, the possibility of unconscious influences from the vernacular in broader New Zealand music culture remains a potential avenue for investigation.) Finally, this thesis

contributes to an embryonic meta-narrative around a "DIY" tradition in New Zealand music—which could join John Mansfield Thomson's "performing tradition" and "composing tradition" (1991)—by extending this concept to the homemade music of the other ninety-nine percent of New Zealanders. By applying the vernacular concept in depth for the first time in this country, then, the thesis has opened the door to some new ways of talking about the interconnections and development of the broader music culture that may redirect our thinking about New Zealand music.

At a more practical level, the present ethnographies can serve as comparative templates for future studies of tramping club singsongs and the Māori guitar strumming style in other parts of the country. They also provide models for reconsidering the numerous other topics highlighted by the folksong collectors and others, whose vernacular components, social context, and substantiality have yet to be fully assayed. The studies serve to indicate the relevance of other scholarly *parerga*, too, which could repay further research, including "bottle parties" and other informal singsong cultures of mid-twentieth century New Zealand, grassroots song books and party/bawdy songs, other self-taught instrumental accompaniment styles, the "kiwi idiom" popular music genre, and 1950s-1970s Māori cultural groups and their LPs.

Any future work, however, should take care to acknowledge the vernacular's fluctuating character and avoid reifying or misrepresenting it. Practitioners themselves, it should be remembered, often assumed the liberty to take for granted or treat such music-making casually. These attitudes indicated not that such music was worthless, but that they could afford to treat lightly that which was *always there for everybody*.

This may be the hardest aspect of the vernacular concept for us grasp, for we are ordinarily so oriented to finding "value" in things which are scarce, rare, or exceptional in some way—a tendency found in musicological preoccupations with hieratic achievement and technical complexity, as well as music which has special cultural status, subcultural or political cachet, or which is threatened or vanishing. As Charles Keil notes, even notions which we are inclined to uncritically accept, like "musical talent", contribute to "dividing the world into artists and appreciators, the participating precious few and the applauding not-so-precious many" (2002:43). This epistemology of "value" based on scarcity may reflect the recent ascendancy of free-market economic

thinking, whereby "ways of life become worthy or unworthy according to our choice of whether or not to invest in them" (Cayley 1992:23). Consequently, choices and judgements based on "value"—including those in scholarly research—inadvertently cast a shadow over a larger mass of that which has "nonvalue" (159-161), like the musical phenomena covered in this thesis.

The concept of vernacular, however, properly understood, casts no such shadow of "non-value". Instead, it builds on the proposition that human beings share a basic musical faculty (Blacking 1973) by proposing the existence of an immanent desire to *shape* music: an expressive domain akin to vernacular speech. "Vernacular" can be considered a theory of musical change as universal and ephemeral, not needing to resolve into significant or enduring forms, as a teeming plenum of possibilities. (Seen in this light, a comparison between "vernacular" and other theories of musical change, like acculturation or hybridity, could be the focus of future theoretical work.)

These ideas also contribute to a practical manifesto with special relevance in the twenty-first century, as humankind struggles with population growth, diminishing natural resources, climate change, environmental degradation, and increasing wealth inequalities. Scientist Jared Diamond estimates that the average Westerner currently consumes resources and generates waste at thirty-two times the rate of people in other countries (2008). Given that people in Western societies seem to be generally tending to participate less in and consume more music (Keil 2002; Tipping 2005), a twentieth-century trend confirmed to some extent by the ethnographies in this thesis, more making-our-own music could help lower an inordinate consumption rate. Enlarging the domain of the homemade is inherently empowering, too, freeing people from dependencies created by musical commodities, institutions, professionals, and other experts, thereby releasing their capacities for self-reliance and resourcefulness. As the thesis has shown, people can thus devise satisfying musical idiocultures using little more than their memories, voices, and possibly a guitar.

We all regularly encounter the vernacular of "music without musicians": in the street, around the birthday cake, at church, the sports match, parties, concerts, and in the bathroom shower. Children's playground rhymes remain a flourishing exemplar. Once such possibilities are perceived, it becomes easier to find others and envisage what else

might be possible: one sees “the vernacular shining through like tiny bright stars in a cloud-filled night sky” (Schwartz 2002:105). Who would ever give up the freedom of everyday vernacular speech just because skilled orators or professional speakers exist? Similar sovereignty over music-making is available at any time.

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2. Interviews

All interviews with Michael Brown for this study, made in accordance with guidelines approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington. Earlier interviews which have been consulted are marked with an asterisk (*).

Andersen, Andy	Lower Hutt	4/12/2004*	[A]
		4/12/2005*	[B]
		25/5/2008	[C]
Bollinger, Nick	Telephone interviews	5/3/2009	[A]
		6/3/2009	[B]
Boswell, Don	Lower Hutt	19/2/2008	[A]
		18/4/2008	[B]
Brown, Don	Wellington	22/2/2008	[A]
		5/6/2008	[B]
Claridge, Graham	Lower Hutt	7/4/2008	

Claridge, Judith	Lower Hutt	14/4/2008	
Cuthbertson, Lindsay	Wellington	11/4/2008	
Dalziel, Colin	Lower Hutt	18/4/2008	
Dement, Frank	Levin	28/2/2008	
Dement, Naomi	Levin	28/2/2008	
Gates, Bill & Pam	Lower Hutt	14/4/2008	
Gates, John	Lower Hutt	8/4/2008	
Gobey, Dave	Wellington	3/4/2008	
Grace, Himiona	Wellington	18/9/2008	
Griffen, Wayne	Paraparaumu	26/5/2008	
Hooper, Claude	Wellington	4/2/2009	
Horne, Chris	Wellington	31/8/2004*	
Isaacs, Ray	Marton	26/5/2009	
King, Janet	Wellington	4/3/2008	[A]
		14/4/2008	[B]
McCaskill, Jamie	Wellington	14/3/2009	
Mowbray, Trevor & Mary	Wellington	16/6/2008	
Nathan, Bill	Wellington	4/4/2009	[A]
		7/4/2009	[B]
Offer, Kath	Lower Hutt	14/4/2008	
Perry, Maurice	Otaki	27/2/2008	
Piper, Pip	Plimmerton	7/3/2008	

Priest, Michael	Wellington	10/4/2009	[A]
		22/4/2009	[B]
Rollo, Te Manaaroha	Email interview	30/6/2009	
Ross, John	Palmerston North	12/3/2008	
Royal, Charles	Porirua	16/12/2008	[A]
		12/2/2009	[B]
Russell, Carmel	Wellington	10/5/2009	
Somerset, David	Wellington	31/3/2008	
Somerset, Tony	Wellington	13/3/2009	
Vercoe, Tony	Whitby	9/4/2008	[A]
		19/3/2009	[B]
Anonymous (“David”)		27/3/2009	
Anonymous (“Heni”)		27/3/2009	
Anonymous (“Mel”)		20/2/2009	

3. Archives and personal collections

Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

Tararua Tramping Club papers, MS-Group-0545

Tararua Tramping Club, Wellington

Photograph albums, song books, ephemera, recordings

Victoria University of Wellington, library special collections

Victoria University College Tramping Club records

Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club, Wellington

Photographs

New Zealand Film Archive, Wellington

Archival films

Brown, Michael

Song books, manuscripts, audio and video recordings

Cuthbertson, Lindsay

Song books

Gilkison, Alistair

Recordings

Horne, Chris

Manuscripts, typescripts, song books

Priest, Michael

Video and DVD recordings