

'DAL' FROM PAGE 18 hearing it, that's the way it should be. There's a strong section of Maoridom against things that are new. I knew I'd get up their noses, especially if Ngoi thought that, and I was right.

"The whole idea of the video was to show the transition of Maori cultural groups from the pa to the city. I wanted to highlight that we were survivors, and the main survivor was the language. Even though we had taken Maori music to another sphere, the language was unchanged.

"I got letters galore and phone calls from Maori fundamentalists (I like calling them fundamentalists) ... The hardest thing was getting knocked by my own people. So I locked myself away in Hawera. Ngoi didn't like the video — it was too way out for her. The whole idea of it was to show the evolutionary growth of the Maori, the political and economic growth. Ngoi changed her mind. She rang me up and said, 'I see what you're saying. All my grandchildren are bopping to 'Poi E'!"

As 'Poi E' broke, Dalvanus was in Europe, at the Midem music festival, where overseas companies showed keen interest in what the Patea Maori Club were doing. When he came home, two reporters were waiting for him at the airport. "Do you know you're No 1?" they asked. It freaked me out!"

"'Poi E' had an incredible effect on the community,"

says Dalvanus. "It brought the town really close together. The Patea Maori Club is their pride and joy." All proceeds from the Club go into the Patea Cultural Trust, "one niche of the revitalisation of the community."

Three years after the closing of the Patea freezing works, and the ghost-town predictions that went with it, the event is now seen in a positive light. "The closing of the works made us go back to what we're good at — living off the land."

The Rangitaahi Trust is a key element in the striving towards self-sufficiency. Formed four years ago with the amalgamation of nine local marae, the trust has created jobs by making use of government work schemes, (which, among other things, helped upgrade run-down marae) and is now establishing long-term employment in horticulture, meat processing and other activities. The trust is also a centre for counselling and social work, and its office in the main street of Patea is where the Patea Maori Club's activities are organised.

"For a start, there was a really dull atmosphere after the works closed," says trust manager Nick Pirikahu. "People didn't know where to turn to. We've been able to pull ourselves out of that vacuum and achieve self-determination and pride. We made submissions to the government saying, these PEP schemes are a waste of time and money. Give us funding, and we'll create long

term employment.

"The community has become stronger since the closure. When the works were open, people were individuals. With no money, people pool their resources. It's been tough, but they've learnt to accept it. People had to stay here, this is their turangawaewae ... a bonus of the closure has been the teaching of our culture: taha Maori. Knowing who you are

performed on television 12 times in a week, in the House of Commons, at a Nelson Mandela benefit with many black acts, and even busked at Covent Garden.

NME made 'Poi E' single of the week, and BBC's Radio One playlisted it. "Getting it on high rotate is the secret, but we didn't have the right video. I wanted to make a video showing clips of Prince Charles and the Beatles all

cultural ventures. A visit to the Brent Black Music Co-operative in London, a training centre for musicians with a heavy emphasis on reggae, further fired

Dalvanus's dreams of creating employment out of music and traditional culture.

In America, the club were given a lot of assistance by the Violent Femmes. They played together at the cult venue Irving Plaza, and the Femmes made sure the right critics were there. The club performed for New Zealand's new ambassador Bill Rowling, and after Kool and the Gang at Disneyland's 30th anniversary celebrations.

Before the first concert in London however Dalvanus received news that Ngoi Pewhairangi had died. "I cracked up. I wanted to come home," he says. "But she would have murdered me if I had. Ngoi had blessed me — a woman from another tribe. Part of my life is dedicated to carry on her work. I found my Maori soul through Ngoi."

One of Ngoi's dreams, shared by Dalvanus, is for a national cultural group, made up of members of all tribes, with in-house training for its young members along the lines of the Bolshoi Ballet — and financed along the lines of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the "epitome of monoculturalism. The New Zealand government is happy to use Maori culture to welcome overseas guests, but won't fund it effectively."

Essential to the preservation of the culture and language is the establishment of a Maori radio network to counter the damage done by the disinterest, token gestures, or just plain racism of New Zealand's radio establishment. "Radio is embarrassed by the Maori language. They say that Pakehas don't want to hear it, well we've proved that's garbage." The importance of radio is hit home when Dalvanus visits an elderly relative in Patea, confined to bed and listening to the opening of Te Maori broadcast from Wellington (on Access Radio, naturally) — elated to hear her own language on her radio.

But Dalvanus is not one to blame the Pakeha for everything. He regrets the lack of solidarity in Maoridom, and the handicap of tribal differences. "Maoris should have total control of their destinies. Should the state provide everything? No. We should tap our own resources and capitalise on them. But that's not to say we don't hold our hand out for our share at the same time."

Dalvanus describes the Patea Maori Club LP, to be released this month, as a concept album, with six songs on it being from the musical that is "stage three" of his artistic masterplan. Called *Raukura*, the concept side begins with 'Ko Aotea', a chant about the canoe which sailed from Hawaiiiki



Dalvanus with his 'Poi E' partner Ngoi Pewhairangi: "Through her I found my Maori soul"

PHOTO GIL HANLY

and where you come from, knowing your whakapapa, gives you purpose and pride."

The proudest moments for Patea have been the two overseas trips the club has made, touring England and the United States, plus a royal command performance in London. With excellent groundwork by their UK record company Sonnet, the Patea Maori Club were feted on their travels. Audiences loved their shows, they

swinging pois. It would have taken off in Britain. We asked Buckingham Palace for permission — Yes! We asked Paul McCartney — Yes! But TVNZ wouldn't let us use the film. What's their function? Who are they supporting?"

Dalvanus met Ken Livingston, chairman of the Greater London Council (now dissolved by Thatcher) and observed the support the GLC's Ethnic Minorities Group gave to community