

Rongopai Broughton as Tu and Rangimoana Taylor



The Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Maori Artist and Writers Society continues to sponsor Maori Theatre. Their latest production was "Te Waka Karaitiana" compiled by Brian Kirby and performed at Ngaruawahia on the occasion of the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to the Turangawaewae Marae.

The production was a dramatised documentary compiled from research of

documents of the Anglican Church, Journals, Diaries and letters of the Early Missionaries themselves. The production examined the values and actions of these early missionaries and gave a modern interpretation of them. It seemed to become a discussion of christian mythology versus Maori theology and ended with a "where to from here?" question with audience participation.

The short rehearsal period necessitated a great deal of pressure for the technical crew who could be said to have pulled off a major coup in that their first full rehearsal was the performance itself at Ngaruawahia. I refer here to Stage Manager Brian Kirby, Lighting Designer Lin Hobin, Lighting Assistant Dawn Underwood, Producing Secretary/Slide projectionist Tui Cherrington and Properties, Georgina Kirby. Their skill and expertise was a large factor in the success of the production.

The play was directed by Don Selwyn of "Mortimers Patch" fame and written/compiled by Brian Kirby. The Maori text was by Rev. Kingi Ihaka and the late George Tait.

The cast was as follows:

Maori Narrator — Robin KORA
Pakeha Narrator — Roger FOWLER
Kaumatua — Pura PANAPA
Pakeha Bishop — Rev. Bob SCOTT
Maori Minister — Paki CHERRINGTON
Rev. Panapa — Rameka COPE
Pakeha Priest — Richard HOWARD
Young Maori — Wiki OMAN
Hone Heke — Whatanui SKIPWORTH
Kendall — Don KJESTRUP

Te Kore Karanga — Georgina KIRBY
Governor — Sean DUFFY

Maori Messenger — Graham SMITH

The following participants were from ST JOHNS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE Maori Group:

Rio Katene, Matanuku Kaa, Wi Tamara, Wikitoria Panapa, Aroha Panapa, Pare Panapa, Marlene Panapa, Nicola Panapa, Maia Tamarapa, Davey Tamara.

Pakeha Group:

Richard Ellena, Hillary Ellena, Peter Sykes, Vicki Sykes, Bob Barnes, Tim Meadowcroft, Sue Meadowcroft, Jackie Sewell, Elspeth Bunny, Jim Stuart, George Armstrong, Diana Gilberd.

Participants from Queen Victoria School:

Tutor — Sonny ABRAHAM

Rangi — Michelle MOANA

Papa — Carrie CLARKE

Karanga — Darlene HAURAKI

plus: Elsie Dixon, Kathleen Toi, Bernice Thompson, Tangiwai Clark, Mereana Coleman, Joylene Winitana, Deborah Nathan, Tania Muir, Roimata Wharehuinga, Justine Keelan, Alaina Rupune, Cindy Grbic and Shiralee Crimmins.

The Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Maori Artists and Writers would like to perform "Te Waka Karaitiana" at other venues. The Branch will be workshoping shortly two plays "June Day" a play by Dawn Underwood plus "The Gospel according to Tane" by Selwyn Muru. Plays by Hone Tuwhare and Ray Illingworth are also being considered.

and rejects both her children.

The production lacked Maoriness and I can no longer forgive a pakeha actor or actress playing a Maori and mispronouncing Maori words. This is indefensible in today's acting world.

Having made the above statements I must point out the two young Maori people were this production's saving grace. I refer here to James Cherrington, Ngati Hine of Ngapuhi who gave an energetic and convincing performance as the rebellious son. He continues to add to his acting credits and matures as an actor with each production. I refer also to Hinetangi Coleman, a 16 year old Ngati Porou 5th former at Queen Victoria who plays Queenie. Her very natural portrayal of the naive but winning young girl shows that she has a future in the acting world should she pursue it.