



Hirini Melbourne 1949-2003

***He Maimai Aroha: A tribute to Hirini Melbourne
(husband, father, grandfather, friend, musician, scholar, and honorary doctor)***

*Tēnei ngā whakakōrunga; tēnei ngā whakakērunga; tēnei ngā whakaihinga
Ka takoto i te hau o Marangai!
Marangai ki uta! Marangai ki tai! Marangai ki Tū,
Ko Tū-kā-riri ! Tū-ka-rūhā! Tū-kai-tauā !
Whakarewa ana ki ana waipū -
Kia ea ake ana ko tāu nei whakangaua ki te pae whakaeke o Rehua
Ka tauwehe te Pō ! Pō! Ka ao - ka awatea !
Hīrini, e te rangatira, moe mai i te rua kōiwi o ō tūpuna mātua o Ngāi Tūhoe
i raro i ngā parirau o tō Kaihanga - Haere! Haere! Haere - oti atu.*

With the passing of Dr. Hirini Melbourne, Dean of the School of Māori and Pacific Development, on the 6th of January 2003 at the age of 53, the Tari Maori, Development Studies, Te Timatanga Hou, Te Whakapiki Reo, the School of Maori and Pacific Development, and the University of Waikato mourn the loss of a favourite son whose support of the School will be sorely missed. We mourn with Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Kahungunu, and the Melbourne family, especially with his widow Jan, their children Māhina and Māia, and grandchildren, Amokura and Manukaimiro. We feel that we can do no better here than provide our readers with a copy of the citation for Hirini's honorary doctorate (bestowed 23 March 2002).



**Citation of
HIRINI MELBOURNE**

**for the Degree of Honorary Doctor
of the University of Waikato**

Chancellor, the highest award the University can make is its Honorary Doctorate. It may do so to persons who are distinguished in learning and scholarship, have shown strong interest in the well-being of the University, have been of outstanding service to the community and are of national or international repute. Today we honour Hirini Melbourne.

I whānau mai a Hirini i Whakatāne, ka pakeke mai i roto o Ruatoki atu ki te wā ka wehe atu ia kia haere ki te Kāreti o Te Aute. Ka mutu tana kura ka uru atu ia ki ngā mahi akoako hei kura māhita. Ka tukuna ki Whakatāne hei kaiako i te reo Māori me ngā kaupapa pāpori. Kāore i roa, ka riro ki Pōneke ki reira mahi mai ai i roto i te Wāhanga o te Manatū Tohu Mātauranga hei kaituhi pukapuka mā ngā tamariki ririki i roto i te reo Māori. Mai i konā, ka whakahaua e Hoani Rangihau kia haere mai a Hirini ki te Whare Wānanga o Waikato i runga i te whakaaro he pūmanawa o Hirini kia tukuna, kia tipu, kia pakari hoki. I te tau 1978, i tīmata ai te uri o te kaimanawa nei o Tūhoe Pōtiki i tana mahi hei kaiako i te reo, i ngā kaupapa ahurea me te hītori.

Ka whānau mai te tangata nei ka whakamoea e ōna atua ngā taonga ki roto ki a ia, ā tōna wā e puāwai ai. I a ia ka mahi i ana mahi akoako, ka korikori ngā taonga o te momo reo, ko tōna kotahi anake pea i whakawhiwhi ai. Ka waihangā mai te tangata nei i ana kupu, i ōna whakaaro, i ana rangi, kātahi ka whāngaihia ki ngā taringa, ki ngā hinengaro, ki ngā ngākau me ngā wairua o ngā tamariki i te tuatahi. Titi rawa ana aua waiata ki ngā tauwharewharenga o te ngākau tangata ahakoa i tuhia, i titoa mā te hunga tamariki. Koia tēnei ko ngā āheitanga i whakawhiwhi ai ki te maramara o te maunga o Maungapōhatu.

Ka waiho tēnei tohungatanga hei huarahi whakatō i te whakaaro Māori, i te ngākau Māori, i te reo Māori, i te kupu Māori ki roto i te iti me te rahi tae atu ki ngā akonga o ngā whare wānanga o te motu. Ka taka te wā, ka whakaohotia mai anō tētahi o ngā taonga i whakamoea rā i roto i a ia, arā, ko ngā taonga pūoro a te Māori i noho mō tētahi wā roa pērā me te huia kua reo kore. Nā āna takutaku me āna whāinga ka tīmata te reo o te toka, o te rākau, o te poroiwi, o te aha atu a te Māori ki te tangitangi mai anō.

Koinei te huarahi i kitea ai e te tangata nei, e Hirini, hei whakaohooho i roto i te Māori i tō rātou Māoritanga. Hōrapa ana tēnei āhuatanga ki ngā tōpito o te motu. Tēnei tātou e rongō nei e pāorooro ana i roto i ngā whare kōrero, i ngā wānanga, i ngā kāinga o tēnā whānau, o tēnā whānau.

Āpiti atu ki tēnei, ko te tohungatanga o tēnei tangata ki te whakawhiti i te whakaaro hou ki roto ki te hinengaro o te akonga kia rekareka ai te akonga ki aua whakaaro, ā, kia kitea ai e ia he ao hou tonu kei tua atu i ngā rāhui o tōna hinengaro. Hāunga ia ana mahi tito waiata, ana tuhituhi pukapuka i te reo Māori, engari, ko te tino taonga i whakawhiwhia ai ki tēnei tangata ko tōna āhei ki te whakawhānui i te titiro a tētahi kē ki te whakaaro ki te kaupapa, ki ētahi āhuatanga rānei.

Ko te tohu ka tukuna nei ki a ia, ko te tohu ikeike rawa o te Whare Wānanga i runga i te whakaaro kua rite i a ia ngā āhuatanga katoa e whakawhiwhia ai tētahi ki tēnei tohu kairangi. Nā reira, kua huihui katoa mai tātou ki te whakanui i te tangata kua roa nei ia e whakangahau ana, e whakamātau ana, e whakamōhio ana i a tātou ki ngā tohu o tō tātou ao e wareware ana i a tātou i ētahi wā.

E kī ana te kōrero mō tēnei tangata, ka tīoriwari te tute, ka haunene te tāwaka, ka tumu te rupe. Ki tā Hirini e koekoe te tūi, e ketekete te kākā, e kūkū te kererū. Koia tēnei ko Hirini te tangata a te katoa i tukua ai e Tūhoe kia topa, kia tiu ki ngā kokonga o te ao hei manu karere atu i te reo o ōna mātua, o ōna tīpuna.

Chancellor, I present to you for the Award of the Degree of Honorary Doctor of the University of Waikato, Hirini Melbourne.



Born 21 July 1949 at Whakatāne, of Tūhoe and Ngāti Kahungunu descent, Associate Professor at the University of Waikato, Hirini has been involved in two main strands of his life as a musician and as a teacher of the Māori language, culture and history through te reo Māori. He is also known as a writer for young Māori, has a well established reputation as a Māori historian, has been an editor of Māori publications, a translator, and has a continued involvement in pressing claims with the Waitangi Tribunal for his Tūhoe people.

Raised in Ruatoki, a Tūhoe community about 20 kilometres out of Whakatāne, Hirini's life was certainly influenced by the environment provided by that district where Māori was the first language of 98% of the people. The geographic, historical and wildlife nature of that area will have served to provide Hirini with experiences and images that would characterise both his writings and his musical compositions. It was a community which necessarily reflected the Tūhoe psyche and in which the individual needed to be an extraordinary person in order to display outstanding talent. The community was, and is still, close knit and does not readily accept changes to well established conventions. It is in this context that Hirini was able to accomplish remarkable achievements, especially in the world of music, and make his mark as an outstanding teacher and a well respected academic.

He was educated at Ruatoki High School and Te Aute Māori Boys' College before training as a teacher and being posted to Whakatāne High School to teach Māori and Social Studies. During his term there it became apparent that teaching the Māori language was going to be difficult, because of the lack of resources, and that few Māori were writing in Māori. This provided the incentive for Hirini to take up a position with the Ministry of Education in the School Publications' Branch. His role there made a huge impact on publications for young children, especially those raised in the urban context. Being astute, Hirini saw where the deficiencies lay and

developed a style that has been used as a model for writers of Māori for children of subsequent years.

These were Hirini's years in which his genius for composing songs for young people and his eventual research into traditional Māori musical instruments began to take form. The renowned Tūhoe scholar and kaumātua, John Rangihau, persuaded him to shift to Waikato and take up a position with the Māori Department in 1978. Rangihau recognised skills that Hirini possessed as a writer and also saw his potential in composing songs that were to have an immediate and lasting effect, not only on Māori, but also amongst Pacific peoples and ethnic groups around the world.

These talents were put to good use by Hirini in developing courses taught in the Māori department and eventually led to the establishment of a course involving the creation of, and performance with, traditional Māori instruments. This course is recognised among Māori as the most prestigious of any course of this nature, because Hirini has maintained a reputation as an excellent teacher and someone who is well versed in the art.

Hirini is often identified and recognised by people for his musical talents. Indeed, these tend to overshadow the contribution he has made to the Māori language and culture over the last 27 years. It is fair to say that his scholarship and his creative mind have served to promote te reo Māori to many communities throughout Aotearoa. During his time with this University, Hirini has, through application and dedication, risen to the position of Associate Professor. He employs an innovative approach to teaching courses with an ability to form an immediate rapport with students and staff alike. Being an adaptable person, he learned to work with Māori communities, remaining sensitive to their needs. His principles ensured that the institution was properly served, that knowledge was enhanced and the Māori language and culture were provided within a conducive environment necessary for the survival of te reo me ngā tikanga to thrive.

This ability has allowed him to transcend tribal and cultural differences. Choosing the "right moment" is a special gift that Hirini has employed to allow people to feel included in teaching programmes, hui, and other activities of a formal and social nature. While strongly advocating the Māori language and culture, both traditional and contemporary, he is always seeking ways of developing bridges between different groups in order to realise the partnership principle of the Treaty of Waitangi. This has been reflected in course offerings and joint or inter-departmental and inter-school programmes that serve his view that the University is an institution that reflects an appropriate model of partnership.

His period of time with the University of Waikato and the communities of its catchment area and beyond, have all, in no small way, been left with a Melbourne template. Complementing this are the achievements that he has gained through his work as a composer and writer. As an example, he won the non-fiction section of the New Zealand Post Children's Book Award 2000, he attended the South Pacific Festival of Arts 2000 in Noumea, the New Zealand Festival of Arts 2000 in Wellington and was a finalist in the New Post Children's Books Award. He was commissioned to write the festival song for the New Zealand Youth Orchestra and National Māori Choir 1999; performed at WOMAD Auckland 1999; represented New

Zealand at the Polynesian Music Festival in Rarotonga 1996; published and produced the highly acclaimed Toiapiapi tape and book 1995; produced Te Kū, Te Whē featuring voices of Ngā Taonga Pūoro 1994; and won first prize in the Goodman Fielder Wattie Book Award 1991. He was a member of the New Zealand Film Commission; a member of the New Zealand Music Commission; and a Board member of Te Waka Toi. The list can go on which would include compositions for the Merchant of Venice in Māori 2002 and for many other groups and organizations of national significance.

The one great passion that Hirini has had from the time he started his research for his Masters degree was to write and produce material which will be used in the forthcoming Tūhoe claim before the Waitangi Tribunal over confiscation of land and other acts and omissions by the Crown. He has, in all his busy life, never faltered in his commitment to this task. Tūhoe knows the contribution that their son has made to them and will, in due course, share with him their pride in his achievements. There are many, many more things that could be said of Hirini, but the University now wishes to honour the achievements of Associate Professor Hirini Melbourne citing these reasons:

He has contributed, in process and in principle, to the establishment of a very strong and active Māori language and culture environment, not only in the University, but in many Māori communities beyond even its catchment area.

He has, through his musical genius, conveyed, in particular to Maoridom, the beauty of their language and culture. He has also enhanced the teaching of the Māori language through innovative courses and through his commitment to visit communities no matter how remote, to establish the process of taking the language to disadvantaged groups. He has done this with dedication and with the humility that is a hallmark of his everyday life.

His publications of the Māori language are recognised as necessary resource materials and instruments concerned with the maintenance and survival of te reo Māori.

The Māori dimension of the University has been vested by Hirini with a mana and recognition that provides the incentive for Māori to choose to attend this institution. His relationships with these people will continue to serve both Māori and knowledge very well.

In conclusion, and to reflect the way in which he has touched many, many people with his demeanour and his ability through the word to reach out and be inclusive, Hirini personifies the expression that “Composers should compose songs that ordinary people can whistle or sing”. This exemplifies the genius of Hirini Melbourne.

Nā Te Wharehuia Milroy





E kore koe e wareware i a mātou.
