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A "Harmony of Frenzy": Māori in Manhattan, 1909–10

Marianne Schultz

In February 1910 Kiwi Amohau recounted in his "He Reta No Nga Maori Ki Niu Ioka" (a letter from the Māori in New York) the "many marvelous things going on in the Hippodrome," especially "one very remarkable thing I will describe to you." A fellow performer, the elder Māori explained, "flies up some 80 feet and then flying down headfirst he reaches a platform located in that space. He flies out to that platform which curves down below, and then he races up and reaches the platform base. And this is without any harm to his body."[1] The awe-inspiring, death-defying act of a trapeze artist proved to be just as exciting and incomprehensible to this performer from the South Pacific as his display of Māori *haka* was to New York audiences.

Developments in popular culture in the early twentieth century reflected the increasing speed of communication and ease of transportation, allowing hitherto unknown peoples and corporeal expressions to connect while also witnessing the rise in racial categorizations and representations of race in Western societies. With these developments evolved examples of cultural hybridity and the mingling of performance styles and forms from diverse and contrasting origins. This essay explores the performances of Māori (indigenous New Zealanders) who traveled to New York City in 1909 to perform on the world's largest stage, the New York Hippodrome. For nine months their twice-daily appearance in the thirty-minute spectacular *Inside the Earth* thrilled audiences with performances of Māori cultural expression embedded in a "drama with

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[1] Kiwi Amahou, "Kua mene katoa nga iwi o te ao ki te mahi ki tenei whare i nga tau kua taha ake nei, ko te iwi Maori o Niu Tireni te mutunga, a ko ta Niu Tireni anake nga mahi hou kua kitea nei kua mahia ki tenei whare ki te Hippodrome. Ko te tino whakamiharo rawa o matau ranga- tira ko te pai o a matau mahi e mahi atu nei, a he nui rawa to ratau manaaki i a matau. Ko te tikanga o ta matau mahi i haeremai ai e rua tuunga i te ra he hawhe haora mo ia tuunga mo ia tuunga" (*Te Pipiwharauroa* 142 [February 1910]: 10).

music" written by the Hippodrome stalwart, R. H. Burnside. The performances by the Māori, described in a Chicago newspaper as a "harmony of frenzy," were hailed as the highlight of the drama.[2] Furthermore, during their time in New York the performers made headlines for reasons unrelated to *Inside the Earth*, as they took part in events outside the theatre, involving the football field and suffragists rallies, that disrupted notions of race, culture, and gender in America.

The inclusion of indigenous peoples in forms of entertainment evolved from such mid- nineteenth-century presentations as P. T. Barnum's gypsies and the "Wild Men of Borneo" to William "Wild Bill" Cody's rodeo-like Wild West featuring Native Americans at the end of the century. Specifically, the transition from "performing ethnology" to dramas and spectacles that incorporated indigenous performers into their narratives point to the increasing effects of imperial expansion and colonization throughout the world at this time.[3] While Western nations colonized, subjugated, incorporated, and assimilated indigenous cultures, the need to *re*-present these "lost cultures" onstage and at sites of tourism increased. As Jane Goodall states, "wildness was a very European concept and the successful performance of it required some careful fashioning."[4] By the early twentieth century the need for ever-more thrilling performances sent theatrical producers to the ends of the earth in search of the next unknown "native" to appear onstage.

The nexus of politics, racial, and gender identities and performing arts is highlighted in this examination of the performances and public personas of forty Māori men and women from New Zealand, hailed as the highlight of the "most magnificent [show] ever seen in New York."[5] Separated from their stage personas as the "mighty Maoris in fiery, frenzied, dancing feats," the *ropū* (group) fashioned representations of New Zealand, as well as their own identities as modern citizens of the world.[6] Their offstage appearances contravened Americans' comprehension of "savages" with their stylish dress, invigorating speech, unique manners, and political participation. Exploring how contemporary racial theories melded into performance and spectacle at this time, this essay explains how the "Maoris of Manhattan" contributed to notions of New Zealand via both real and imagined personas.[7]

The harmony of frenzy on the Hippodrome stage, characterized by precise choreography and harmonious singing, combined with passionate displays of native culture, highlights innovations in performing styles adapted by Māori beginning in the nineteenth century. The expansion in expressions of cultural hybridity can be seen when tracing developments and evolution of fusions in cultural expression, influenced by colonization and the spread of Christianity, especially throughout the British Empire. Thus, *cultural hybridity* can be viewed as *transculturation*, with input, influences, and ideas flowing in many directions at once. As employed in this analysis of popular performance, cultural hybridity and transculturation can be understood as cultural

[2] James O'Donnell Bennett, *Chicago Sunday Record Herald*, November 7, 1909.

[3] This term, employed by Jane R. Goodall, is used to frame her discussion on the convergence of nineteenth-century ethnology and the exhibition of native peoples in Europe and the United States; see Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[4] Ibid., 85.

[5] *Sun*, September 5, 1909.

[6] Advertisement, *New York Times,* October 31, 1909, SM15.

[7] An article in *The World*, November 28, 1909, refers to the performers as the "Maoris of Manhattan."

expressions that are a "result of multiple encounters rather than a single one."[8] The emergence in the early nineteenth century of a hierarchical model of civilization highlights the importance of race in the imagination of the public and provides context for theatrical presentations of and by Māori. Cultural theorist Robert Young discusses the three-tiered categories—savagery, barbarism, and civilization—that framed discourses of culture at this time. Definitions of savagery and civilization formed major themes in the discourse of human evolution. As Young explains, civilization became increasingly defined by difference, and this difference sprang from the hypothesis of progression from the first black-skinned people to the white-skinned Europeans. He concludes that "[t]he extent to which savagery had to be created in the nineteenth century as an antithesis to the values of European civilization becomes clearer and clearer."[9] However, historian Sadiah Qureshi states that the poles between civilized and savage at this time were not "discrete, binary opposites," but instead "part of a developmental spectrum used to taxonomize human social and cultural organization."[10] In her extensive study on ethnographic exhibitions of people in nineteenth-century Britain, Qureshi argues that "due consideration for the political, economic, [and] military circumstances" that impinged on and "informed the transcultural encounters" play an important role in understanding ethnographic displays of the nineteenth century.

As the century progressed, developments in culture, including drama and entertainment, and the demands of audiences intersected with these social and political encounters, enabling new forms of performance to emerge. Christopher Balme has termed these innovations "syncretic theatre."[11] Examining these, alongside examples of cultural hybridity, provide an insight into the evolution of modern performing arts in both indigenous and non-indigenous cultures. At the turn of the twentieth century, discourse surrounding race, authenticity, exoticism, primitivism, and tradition intertwined with the performing arts; New Zealand performers slotted into this international dialogue. The "malleability of ethnicity," as described by M. Alison Kibler, which occurred elsewhere in popular culture during this time period, can be seen in the careers of New Zealand performers.[12] Kibler points out that the link between "modern culture and tradition" can be seen when representations of race and popular forms of performance collide. As discussed here, the performance of Māori cultural expression within a staged spectacular on the "Great White Way" illustrates how the need to supply audiences with unfamiliar and exotic displays of movement and sound conformed to the requirements of the proscenium arch.

From Rotorua to Times Square

In August 1908 sixteen ships of the US naval battleship fleet (the "great white fleet") sailed to New Zealand. In the weeks leading up to the visit, members of New Zealand's

[8] Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 25.

[9] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 33.

[10] Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 278.

[11] Christopher B. Balme has outlined the process of "intercultural theatre" and various ways that indigenous cultures have incorporated Western theatrical practices during colonization and settlement; see Balme, *Decolonizing the Stage: Theatrical Syncretism and Post-Colonial Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. 15–24.

[12] M. Alison Kibler, *Rank Ladies: Gender and Cultural Hierarchy in American Vaudeville* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 115.

Parliament debated how to welcome the Americans.[13] Discussion centered on how to involve Māori in the ceremonies. Apirana Ngata, a prominent MP, saw the welcome of US naval officers as *Pākehā*, or non-Māori New Zealander imperatives casting a shadow over Māori cultural expression. Ngata objected to the exploitation of Māori culture "for the entertainment of tourists."[14] Specifically, he believed that "pressure" had been put on the local Māori, and this was, in his eyes, "reprehensible." In his objection, Ngata stated that members of Te Arawa would "make a show of themselves" if the government's proposed Māori welcome went ahead.[15]

Nonetheless, other prominent Māori leaders disagreed with Ngata's stance, arguing in favor of Māori participation. Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), the medical officer for Māori health, publicized his view in the *New Zealand Herald.* Buck stressed the importance of Māori participation in the welcome, since "[i]t is the [*ngeris* (*sic*) and war dances] that recall to the Maori the glorious traditions of his ancestors; and it is the perpetuation of these that will help to keep alive the feeling of race pride." He concluded: "The Maori welcome is the highest honour the Maoris can confer upon the visitors."[16]

The parliamentary debate concluded that a Māori welcome, consisting of group performance of Māori *haka* and *poi* (dance/unison movement and flax balls attached to strings swung in rhythmic time) would take place; however, the form that the welcome would take was not decided by politicians, but by T. E. Donne, the director of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts (DTHR), in conjunction with his confidant and friend, guide Maggie Papakura of Rotorua, and a Māori clergyman, Reverend Frederick Bennett. Donne, Papakura, and Bennett all contributed to cultural representations of Māori by assembling groups to perform a combination of ancient and modern versions of Māori songs, dances, and games in hotels, public spaces, environmental tourist sites, particularly in Rotorua, and in theatres. As both Papakura and Bennett came from the area and had many connections to the local *iwi* and *hapu* (tribes and sub-tribes), their contribution was vital to the authentication necessary to ensure visitors a "true" experience of both Māori and New Zealand.

An entourage of press accompanied the international travels of the US fleet. Following the reception in New Zealand, the *New York Times* reported on the Maori dances in "weird costumes" in Rotorua, claiming that the "stamping of frenzied feet in the war dances" garnered praise from Admiral Sperry.[17] The New York *Sun* devoted an entire page to the fleet's visit to New Zealand, with reporter Franklin Matthews describing the dances of the Maoris as the "most thrilling and savage exhibition" and the "heartiest greeting of good will" that the fleet experienced on its journey. Matthews called *poi*

[13] *NZPD* 144 (August 6, 1908): 198. According to the *New Zealand Herald*, activities for the 3,000 visiting seamen in Auckland alone consisted of a matinee performance at His Majesty's Theatre, and thereafter an evening musical performance was presented by the "Liedertafel choir of 60 male voices. Another body of 350 American and 50 British seamen will be entertained at the Y.M.C.A. rooms, Albert Street, at a concert, social, and light refreshments." In addition to human performances, the geothermal wonders of Rotorua entertained the visiting naval officers (*New Zealand Herald*, August 11, 1908, 10).

[14] *NZPD* 144 (August 5, 1908): 200.

[15] Ibid., 203; *Evening Post*, August 7, 1908, 3.

[16] *New Zealand Herald*, August 7, 1908, 6. A *ngeri* is a form of *haka* that can be performed as a chant or a chant with dance movements, but cannot be used on occasions of battles; see Wira Gardiner, *Haka: A Living Tradition* (Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett, 2001), esp. 28–34.

[17] *New York Times*, August 13, 1908, 7.

that "wonderful [and] entrancing" dance, adding that nothing "more graceful, more rhythmic [was] ever witnessed by an American party."[18]

The favorable reports of Māori feats of physicality found their way to theatrical entrepreneurs. Upon his arrival back in New York Matthews telegrammed the DTHR with a proposition from New York's largest theatre, the New York Hippodrome. The message curtly stated: "Hippodrome managers want to engage fifty to eighty Maoris to do dances like Reverend Bennett's Company would be great advertisement for New Zealand."[19] With the subsequent arrival in Rotorua of R. W. Macbride (a representative from the Hippodrome) the criterion for selecting performers was stated. His aim, as outlined in an interview with the *Evening Post*, made it clear what the Hippodrome expected: 'They are tired of our Indians . . . these patrons of ours . . . and so I have come across to New Zealand to take back with me a team of Maori dancers to titillate the dulled palates of New York theatre-goers."[20]

Representing Māori

Outside the boundaries of New Zealand's colonial and assimilationist policies, representations of Māori did not resonate within the context of ideas surrounding a lost culture or a dying race. The trope of the "dying Maori" permeated New Zealand social policies and cultural expression during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In relation to this belief, expressions of Māori culture and the Māori race acquired a romantic and nostalgic quality from non-Māori, leading to Māori design, place names, stories, and images utilized by *Pākehā*. Following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 between the British Crown and some Māori tribes and with the annexation of New Zealand, all Māori became British subjects. The increase in inter-racial marriage throughout the nineteenth century, the accelerated settlement of *Pākehā*, and the blending of Māori and European customs all contributed to the process of assimilation, with the accompanying belief that the Māori race would soon be extinct. However, the presence of the Treaty of Waitangi, combined with the determination of Māori to preserve culture and customs, conflicted the reality of the "dying Maori."

In 1901 New Zealand established the first government department of tourism in the world, the aforementioned DTHR. The department promoted and managed many sites of interest, in particular the area of thermal activity, mineral baths, and geysers in the Rotorua district of the North Island. This environment, with its large concentration of Māori, mostly from the tribes of Ngati Whakaue and Te Arawa, provided an ideal setting for the invention of New Zealand as an exotic location. With the expansion of tourism in the country, sites and occasions for the performance of Māori culture, both traditional and manufactured, increased. Thus, the unique and visceral geothermal activity of the environment in Rotorua supported and intensified the corporeal display of Māori. During this era, tourist sites and theatres crystalized this process as Māori performed *being* Māori within European frameworks; specifically, the movements of the *haka* and *poi*, intrinsic to *Pākehā* comprehension of Māori as a people at this time, became symbols of New Zealand on the stage and in situ at tourist destinations. As Jane

[18] *Sun,* October 8, 1908, 4.

[19] Cable from Franklin Matthews to T. E. Donne, April 27, 1909, in Thomas Edward Donne papers, scrapbook relating to Maggie Papakura, qMS-0621, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

[20] *Evening Post*, June 19, 1909, 5.

Desmond contends, "notions of race as a system of bodily based cultural classification dominated European and Euro-American thought at the turn of the century," and it was this corporeal-based understanding of Māori that contributed to their embodiment of New Zealand for North Americans in the early twentieth century.[21]

The year 1901 was also when thousands of Māori from various tribal regions gathered in Rotorua to welcome and perform for the visiting Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. This occasion saw the mass performance of *haka* and *poi*, with Te Arawa alone providing 1,200 performers, led by Kiri Matao. The display of *haka* and *poi* focused the energy of each tribe and, according to Wira Gardner, signaled the beginning of "cultural competition" among the various tribal groups of Māori, showcasing the "haka talents of each tribe . . . on the stage rather than the battlefield."[22] Prior to colonization *haka* would be performed before and after skirmishes, in *whare tapere* (houses of entertainment), as a welcome at *marae* (meeting area and its buildings), and in funeral rites.[23] Although able to be performed by both men and women, the form of *haka* that tourists and audiences clamored for involved bare-chested men standing in rows, wide-spread feet firmly planted, keeping time by chanting, and slapping the thighs and chest. The *poi* dance, primarily performed by *wāhine* Māori (women), involved intricate rhythms caused by the slapping of the string-attached ball on the palms of the hands. *Poi* could be performed seated or standing, always accompanied by song. Following the 1901 royal occasion in Rotorua, the use of *haka* and *poi* in welcome ceremonies for visiting foreign dignitaries was widespread and provided a means for the continuation and development of these forms of cultural expression among Māori. Desmond describes songs and dances "[a]s cultural artifacts . . . believed to be representative of and, since expressive, to be specifically revealing of, a culture or a people," and this type of representation was central to popular entertainment and tourism in the early twentieth century, including those in New Zealand.[24]

"War Cries" on Broadway: Māori in New York

With guidance from Reverend Bennett, a group of forty performers was selected and departed from Wellington Harbor bound for the United States on the *Manapouri* in early July 1909.[25] Sailing via San Francisco, the arrival of the group at Grand Central

[21] Jane C. Desmond, *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 38.

[22] Gardiner, *Haka*, 66, 70.

[23] Te Ahukaramu Charles Royal's PhD dissertation and ongoing research on *Whare Tapere*, on "pre-contact theatre and performing arts," provides a link to the performance genealogies of Aotearoa/New Zealand. While Royal questions the link between present-day *kapa haka* (group dances) and the *waiata* (song) and *haka* of *Whare Tapere*, his findings nonetheless provide important information on the role and type of performing arts in nineteenth-century New Zealand among Mhis fiThe accounts given by early European settlers, as presented by Royal, illuminate contemporary European understanding of *waiata* and *haka*. See Te Ahukaramu Charles Royal, "Te Whare Tapere: Towards a Model for Maori Performance Art" (Ph.D. diss., Victoria University of Wellington, 1998); and Royal, "Orotokare: Towards a New Model for Indigenous Theatre and Performing Arts," in *Performing Aotearoa: New Zealand Theatre and Drama in an Age of Transition*, ed. Marc Maufort and David O'Donnell (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2007), 194.

[24] Desmond, *Staging Tourism*, 17.

[25] Names listed on the *Manapouri* passenger list include: Kaata; Ngatomokanga; Hepi; Erana; Hemi; Mihiterina; Waapi; Kurania; Ani Ngariau; Erena Heretaunga; Miriarangi; Ngatautau; Horomona Paraone; Kiwi Amohau; Hara Piripi; Tamarahi; Pirika; Tuoro; Rangi Tauira; Hikatarewa; Hata Pene; Herewini; Pene Katen; Eruana; Taimona; Haimona; Tara; Teoo; Pohe Hona; Ngamahirau; Henare; Tiakiawa; Hauau;

Terminal made headlines in many of the New York dailies. Prior to their arrival in New York, the group was detained in San Francisco due to medical examinations routinely conducted on all foreign passengers aboard incoming ships. This meant that the Māori passengers of the *Manapouri* were subjected to the "uncomfortable and startling eyelid eversion" testing for trachoma.[26] As foreign travelers the Māori underwent tests for contagious diseases, reflecting the "early-20th-century attitudes toward skin color and nationality."[27] Evidence that this detainment caused distress is seen in a *waiata* (song) composed by the female leader of the group, Matao, during the journey. "Standing at the wharf at San Francisco," she wrote, "the current running, stop until the doctors come, you will not step ashore."[28] Although trachoma was not found among the group, the "Hippodrome proprietors undertook to provide special treatment for the few who had a slight eye trouble but not trachoma."[29] Given permission to proceed, they traveled cross-country to New York in three separate groups.

The *New York Daily Tribune* announced to its morning readers: "Maoris Come to Town. Madison Avenue Gets Its First Sight of the Haka and Likes It."[30] The *New York Press* detailed the commotion caused by their arrival: traveling down Broadway in "two sightseeing autos and preceded by a brass band in another car, [they] shouted their war cries and shook their war clubs and spears at the surprised inhabitants of Manhattan."[31] The references to "war cries" and weapons contextualized these native, "savage," or uncivilized people for New Yorkers, as contemporary understandings categorized indigenous peoples with a rhetoric of the generic Other. Similar to Native Americans, whose "war and scalp dances" featured in Buffalo Bill's Wild West extravaganzas, the Māori vocal chants and threatening gestures stood for an unknown, but intimidating race contained within the confines of the metropolis.[32]

When Cody's (aka Buffalo Bill's) Wild West transitioned from an outdoor extravaganza to an indoor staged theatrical show in the late 1880s, the addition of theatrical props, sets, and tightly directed "scenes" paved the way for other indigenous people and customs to be incorporated into dramas. Steele MacKaye, the US director/designer/actor instrumental in introducing the Frenchman Francois Delsarte's methods

Wirau; Hemi Rongo; Kiri; Rua; Rineha; Kohiri Passenger lists, 1839–1973, Family Search (*http://familysearch.org/*) database with images-family search, FHL digital folder number 004479997, image number 00017, National Archives, Wellington.

[26] Howard Markel and Alexandra Minna Stern, "Which Face? Whose Nation? Immigration, Public Health, and the Construction of Disease at American Ports and Border, 1891–1928." *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, no. 9 (1999): 1314–31, quote on 1322.

[27] Ibid., 1314.

[28] "Tuhia mai nei nga reta powhiri O Merika," *waiata* composed by Kiri Matao. Translation of lyrics in *te reo Māori* (the Māori language): "Ka tu ki te wapu ki Wherehiko,e, Ka rere te au, kati a nga takuta, e kore koutou e takahi ki uta." Archive of Māori and Pacific Music, accession no. 91/026.23, McLean 776–802, University of Auckland.

[29] *Bay of Plenty Times*, September 3, 1909, 2.

[30] *New York Daily Tribune*, August 28, 1909, 12. New Zealand newspapers also reported on their arrival in Manhattan; for instance, the *Otago Daily Times* (October 12, 1909, 2) detailed the commotion by writing that "[n]othing like it had ever been seen or heard before in this city . . . the scenes that were witnessed were nothing short of remarkable. . . . Traffic was suspended. . . . Horses pricked their ears up," while the *New Zealand Herald* (October 12, 1909, 7) explained how "[w]ork in the offices, in the shops, in the factories, ceased till the Maoris went by . . . people hung out of the windows in their thousands to see these men."

[31] *New York Press*, August 28, 1909.

[32] Jacqueline Shea Murphy, *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 59–80.

of "dramatic art" to the United States in the 1870s, was engaged to "dramatize the talents and effects of Buffalo Bill's troupe" in 1886. MacKaye's collaboration with Cody resulted in the *Drama of Civilization*, a "pageant-like performance" featuring cowboys, "Indian war dances," horses, stagecoaches, fire-arm shooting by Annie Oakley, and a cyclone, all staged in Madison Square Garden, transformed into a theatrical space for this production by MacKaye.[33] MacKaye rehearsed the cast and instructed them with "pantomimic training," thus ensuring that audiences were not disappointed with the display of "Indian life . . . [t]heir Manners, Customs and Dances."[34] By the time the Hippodrome, itself a vast, 5,000-seat venue, engaged the Māori performers in 1909, the demand for large-scale, hyper-real performances of savagery was embedded into theatricalized spectacle. Moreover, the nature of this type of popular entertainment called for constant innovation, creativity, and imagination. As the work of Barnum and Cody demonstrated, novelty, danger, and suspense were key features in popularizing the concept of indigenous people as entertainment on a large scale.[35]

Descriptions of the Māori performers' physical attributes, along with their mental and social capabilities, also slotted Māori into the racial hierarchy that was the cornerstone of evolutionary thought at this time. The focus on indigenous people and cultures inevitably forges links to postcolonial analysis: "Thinking through the implications of cultural expression for understanding asymmetrical power relations" helps to understand how and why indigenous and non-indigenous people came together through the performing arts.[36] The "big men and handsome women [gave] Broadway a thrill," while their "amiable smiles took the edge off their warlike demonstrations."[37] An interview with Amohau, the male elder of the group, in the *New York Daily Tribune* on August 28 added an authorial dimension to these descriptions. He attempted to clarify Māori history for the *Daily Tribune*'s readers by explaining that the "Maoris [*sic*] are the only people England ever fought and did not conquer," although adding diplomatically "except the Irish and the Americans."[38] Another article concluded with the assessment, no doubt offered by Amohau, that the "Arawas [*sic*] are the most intelligent as well as the most warlike of the Polynesian tribes."[39]

Press coverage also emphasized the social manners and dress of the Māori in an attempt to construct an understanding of this race for North Americans. Most likely unbeknown to their American observers, the manners that the Māori performers demonstrated offstage typified the objectives of assimilation in New Zealand. Soon after the opening of the Hippodrome show, reports attempted to describe the seemingly incongruent behaviors of the men and women of the company from how they appeared in public. As the *World* explained, "[t]he men wear golf caps, have their trousers pressed, carry canes and smoke cigarettes and say 'surest thing you know,'" while the

[33] Joseph A. Sokalski provides extensive details on MacKaye of transforming the vast arena of Madison Square Garden into a large room fitted with curtains, flooring, and sets, thus providing a suitable performing space for the *Drama of Civilization*; see Sokalski, *Pictorial Illusionism: The Theatre of Steele MacKaye* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 159–60.

[34] From the *Drama of Civilization* program, cited in ibid., 161.

[35] Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin*, 35–46.

[36] Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, eds., "Introduction: On Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music," in *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 5–6.

[37] *New York Press*, August 28, 1909.

[38] *New York Daily Tribune*, August 28, 1909, 12.

[39] *New York Press*, August 28, 1909.

women, "who speak English, have been taken out to luncheon at modish Broadway restaurants, and can hit the bill-of-fare to as costly a tune as any Manhattanese matinee girl."[40] This combination of language, dress, and manners contrasted with the view of Māori that the Hippodrome promoted onstage. However, for the Māori themselves this combination of "authentic" Māori and assimilated Māori was inextricably linked, as *haka*, *poi*, and traditional dress still featured prominently in their lives at home.

The Hippodrome and *Inside the Earth*

The Hippodrome, referred to as the "playground for the nation," catered to an ever-increasing demand for large-scale spectacle and illusion, including "bewildering ballets, thrilling drama, sensational scenic surprises and constantly changing circus."[41] The theatre's facility, its reputation for spectacle, its vast stage (not to mention its "lake"), and army of technicians enabled the presentation of even more thrilling and extravagant theatrical experiences for its patrons.[42] William Taylor, a historian of US culture, believes that the opening of the Hippodrome in 1905 signaled the development of the Times Square area as the entertainment center of Manhattan and "an immense machine for entertainment of 'the masses.'"[43] As he explains, the Hippodrome aimed to provide "everything in the way of entertainment the ordinary citizen could want and at prices . . . most could afford."[44] Thus, the staging of New Zealand and Māori, envisioned as a Māori village and "magic waterfall," could fit comfortably within the "largest playhouse in the world," known for its productions where their "magnitude and grandeur are unequalled on either continent."[45]

The notion of the *ideological mirage* of early-twentieth-century performance, where imperialism, capitalism, and ideas of gender and race converged, materialized in the Hippodrome's triple bill of *A Trip to Japan*, *Ballet of Jewels*, and *Inside the Earth*[46] (fig. 1). *A Trip to Japan* stunned audiences with realistic cruise ships. The costumes made

[40] *World*, November 28, 1909.

[41] *Boston Budget*, October 2, 1909; "Program—1911–1912, Messrs. Shubert present 'Around the World: A Series of Superb Spectacles with Music,'" New York Hippodrome, Variety Stage Program Books, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[42] Program notes on the "Facts and Figures" of the Hippodrome in 1911 state that the "munificent managerial policy of Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert has resulted in a scenic and sartorial equipment more complete and colossal than anything ever before attempted in the annals of theatrical history." The front curtain of the Hippodrome stage, unlike in other theatres, dropped from the ceiling to reveal the stage, rather than the conventional methods of parting in the middle or lifting to the ceiling. According to the program, the "tremendous curtain, which rises and sinks with the silence of a passing cloud" hid the apron, or thrust of the stage, from view, thus concealing or revealing the tank of water that featured in every Hippodrome spectacle. See the Hippodrome program "Around the World" (1911–1912) in "The American Variety Stage: Vaudeville and Popular Entertainment, 1870–1920," Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. See also Milton Epstein, *The New York Hippodrome: A Complete Chronology of Performances, from 1905 to 1939*, vol. 17–18 of *Performing Arts Resources* (New York: Theatre Library Association, 1993), 356–57.

[43] The Theatre District, consisting of the area bounded by 42nd Street and Broadway to 49th Street and 7th Avenue, has Times Square at its heart.

[44] William R. Taylor, *In Pursuit of Gotham: Culture and Commerce in New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 101. See also Taylor, "The Launching of a Commercial Culture: New York City, 1860–1930," in *Power, Culture, and Place: Essays on New York City*, ed. John Hull Mollenkopf (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988), 107–33.

[45] *Boston Budget*, October 2, 1909.

[46] Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 30.

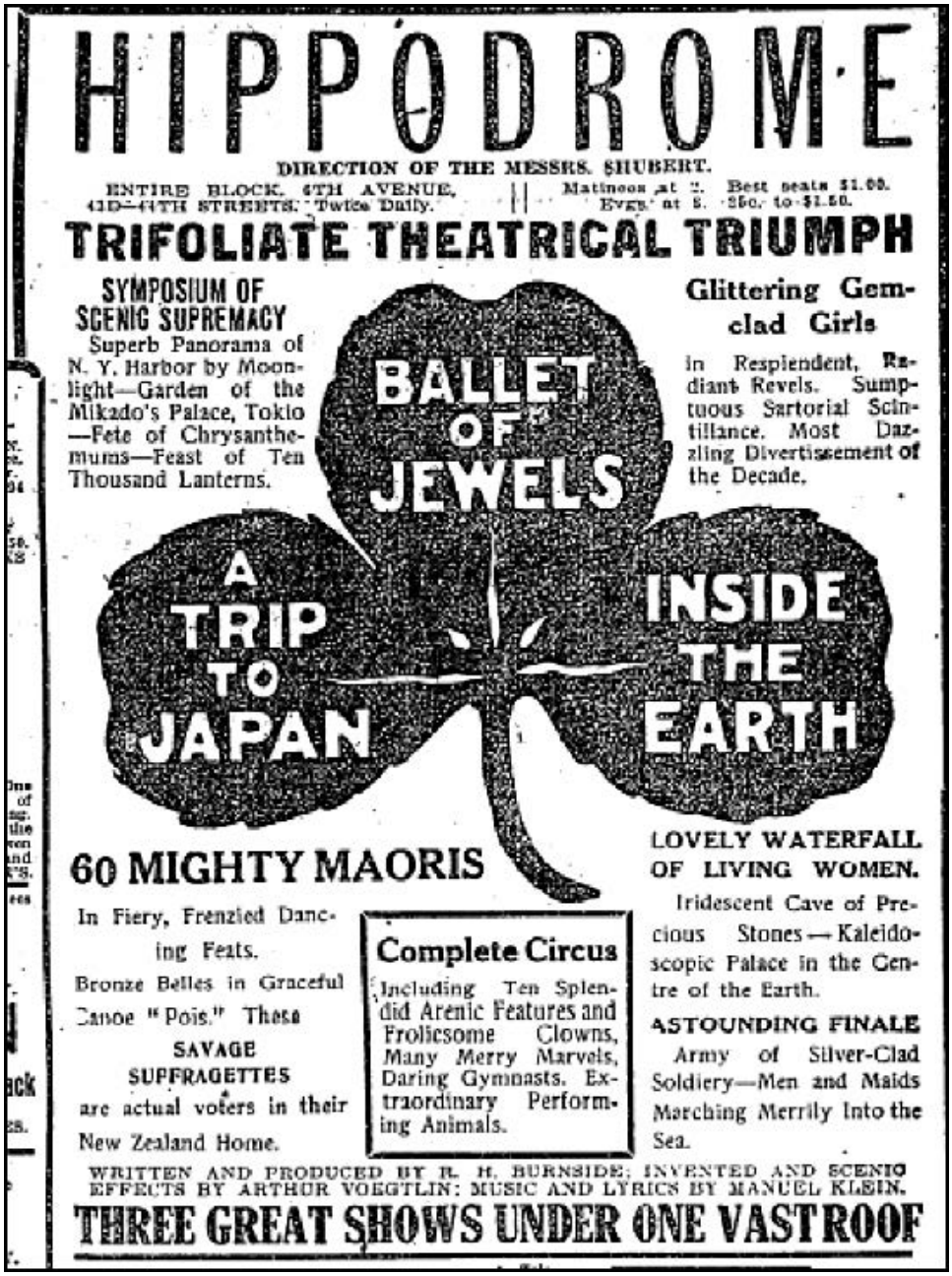

Figure 1. Advertisement for the "Trifoliate Theatrical Triumph" in the *New York Times*. This triple bill of *A Trip to Japan*, *Ballet of Jewels*, and *Inside the Earth* featured "60 Mighty Maoris [in] Fiery, Frenzied Dancing Feats," including the "Savage Suffragettes." (Source: *New York Times*, October 31, 1909, SM15.)

from precious stones in *Ballet of Jewels* dazzled, while the obligatory circus featuring acrobats, gymnasts, and equestrian horses drew laughs. The final spectacular of the program, *Inside the Earth*, featured the Māori performers in a story weaving together working-class US miners, Māori, and mysterious "sun worshippers" inhabiting distant, exotic, and wondrous locales. When the audiences during 1909–10 were transported "inside the earth" they encountered a Māori village and magic waterfall at the base of a sacred mountain, all meant to symbolize a foreign, mysterious land.

Written and directed by Burnside, with music composed and conducted by Manuel Klein and scenic effects by Arthur Voegtlin, *Inside the Earth* featured Oxtacelex, the Inca; Dan Willoughby, the owner of Willoughby mines; David Allen, a partner in the Willoughby mines; and Kiwi, the Māori chief and his tribe of villagers.[47] During the course of the drama the characters provoked thunderous applause with their enactments of the "home life and customs of savage people in distant climes."[48] By all accounts, most thrilling of all were the performances of *haka* and *poi*. The "remarkable bodies and almost horrible vitality" experienced with these dances conformed to the contemporary rhetoric that identified people by their corporeal expression. The performers conjured a strange world peopled with savage though helpful natives who bravely traveled "inside the earth" to rescue the heroine of the drama.[49]

Presented in five scenes with orchestral accompaniment, the drama commenced from the Māori village at the base of the sacred mountain. Moving inside the earth to a subterranean city—the location of the Palace of the Sun King with its attendant sun worshippers (played by "dwarfs")—the story reached its thrilling climax with the march "into the sea [of an] army of men and maids." As the narrative unfolded, the audience witnessed an "elaborate native celebration" in honor of the birthday of Kiwi.[50] While the men performed a vigorous *haka* of welcome, the women's seated "canoe *poi*," mimicking the movements of rowing a *waka* (canoe), signaled a harmonious, happy gathering. Unexpectedly, the celebrations are interrupted when a group of American miners appear, seeking the assistance of the Māori. The Māori, friends of the miners, are called on to assist in the rescue of Rose Allen, who had been kidnapped by the sun worshippers. During the journey to the sacred mountain the rescuers come across the magic waterfall, where the "souls of the maidens sacrificed to the Sun" appear. If not rescued in time, Rose will be the next sacrificial victim. A spectacular fighting scene then ensues, the Māori fighting against the Sun King's supporters in order to reach Rose, who is tied to a sinking boat in the middle of the lake. In the end the Māori save her, forcing the retreating foe into the sea.

This story of working-class white miners, friendly natives in a supernatural environment, and hostile pagan worshippers constructed a world in which goodness, hard work, and simple living triumph over barbaric practices from grotesque bodies. Although, as with other examples of contemporary popular culture, racial representa-

[47] Burnside, who was born in Scotland, made his theatrical career in New York at the Hippodrome, between the years 1908 and 1923. He was responsible for staging over 200 shows in New York. See "Finding Aid for R. H. Burnside Collection," ca.1905–52, in R. H. Burnside Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Division, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York Public Library, New York City (hereafter Burnside Collection).

[48] "Daily Attractions in New York," October 22, 1909, in Burnside Collection.

[49] *Club Fellow*, September 15, 1909, n.p., in Burnside Collection, T-MSS 1952-02, box 14.

[50] Ibid.

tions adhered to constructions of a dominant white male society, *Inside the Earth* also introduced the concept of racial harmony within an expansive globalization of trade, warfare, and communication in pre–World War I America.

Aside from a brief mention in his letter home to New Zealand and published in the Māori newspaper *Te Pipiwharauroa,* the details of what specific *haka* the men performed are not known. However, the performance of Māori culture was singled out, as Amohau explained how the Māori appeared in *Inside the Earth*: "for five minutes we are alone, just us."[51] The native celebration encapsulated and stood for a complete narrative of Māori life and customs within this interracial drama, reflecting MacKaye's staging of Native American customs and dances two decades earlier. Amohau's letter expresses gratitude for his and fellow New Zealanders' treatment and reception at the Hippodrome. He wrote that "[t]he wonder at our nobility, the pleasure in our performances here, and their care of us, have been great indeed."[52] Amohau seems to confirm that any exploitative behavior on the part of the Hippodrome management or creative directors was minimal. *Te Pipiwharauroa,* founded in 1898 by Reverend Bennett and published by the Church of England, of which Amohau was a member, served as a voice for Māori both in- and outside New Zealand. Addressing his letter to "my two peoples of Pakeha and Maori living in New Zealand," Amohau's comments aligned with Te Arawa's historical pro-government, Christian stance by showing gratitude, graciousness, and friendship.

The imagination and dramatic flair of Burnside and Klein fashioned the performance of *haka* and *poi* within the plot of *Inside the Earth*. Klein's score, with its "Valse Maori" in three-quarter time and orchestrated for violins, cellos, clarinets, and drums, reflected the translation, codification, and transcription of *haka* and *poi* rhythms in the twentieth century.[53] Māori participated in and contributed to these new forms of expression. The canoe *poi* performed by the women was a melodic song accompanied by rhythmic *poi* actions and movements of the upper body while the performers remained seated, evoking the motions and rhythms of paddlers. This canoe *poi* was composed by Maggie Papakura and her sister Bella sometime before 1905 and was performed during the 1906–07 Christchurch Exhibition.[54] Klein's orchestration of an already-existing melody used for *poi* recalled the practice of setting it to Western forms of music. In the process of cultural hybridization, the joining of two or more forms, conventions, styles, or aesthetics develops into new forms of expression. Ethnomusicologist of Māori music Mervyn McLean states that "European melodies were made use of in poi songs quite early." He cites the recollection of a Māori woman who as a child during the 1880s "remembered hearing poi . . . performed with an accordion accompaniment."[55] And eight years before her appearance at the Hippodrome, Matao led the massive display of *poi* for visiting British royalty accompanied by accordion, flute, banjo, fiddle, and Jews's harp.[56]

[51] Amahou, *Te Pipiwharauroa,* 10.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Music from *Inside the Earth* by Manuel Klein, Burnside Collection of American Theatre Music Manuscripts, no. JPB83-48, in Billy Rose Theatre Division, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York Public Library, New York City.

[54] Mervyn McLean, *Maori Music,* Auckland, NZ: Auckland University Press, 1996, 316.

[55] Ibid., 125.

[56] R. A. Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand: The Visit of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York to New Zealand, 10th to 27th June, 1901, a Descriptive Narrative* (Wellington, NZ: Government Printer, 1902), 94–114. A photograph in this publication shows the inclusion of these instruments.

Within a week of opening, *Inside the Earth* proved so popular that a "sold out" sign was placed outside the theatre, with more people turned away "than ever before in its history."[57] The drawing card was the performance of the New Zealanders: "The tribe of Maori seemed especially to hit the fancy of those who got in," with another report claiming that "it will probably not be very long before the Maoris will become a fad."[58] Certain performers were singled out for praise and compared favorably with some of New York's most popular stage personalities of the day. Tai, a young male cast member, delivered his one spoken line (in the days prior to amplification) "To the Sinking Islands!" with the "dramatic gusto of a Sothern or a George M. Cohan."[59] May Mackenzie, writing for a Washington society/gossip monthly publication called *Club Fellow,* struggled to suppress her admiration for the physical attributes of the male performers, especially the exposure afforded by their costumes, describing the *piupiu* (skirt made from flax reeds) as "accordion pleated ruffles that are sensitive to breezes." She went on to say that "[t]hey have fine long backs and dance with everything—their hands and features and heads and elbows, and oh, everything. Not an ounce of superfluous flesh, not a collar nor a tie, not a pair of cuff links on a Maori. Ah me!" Mackenzie's exuberance summoned visions of flesh rarely seen on the legitimate stage. Barely able to contain the pleasure of her experience, she urged her readers to "[b]e canny and do not miss those Maoris"[60] (fig. 2).

The movements and sound of *haka*, *waiata*, and *poi* showcased in *Inside the Earth* introduced novel expressions of culture to audiences already familiar with experiences of Otherness and "savages" in the theatre. Previous spectacles at the Hippodrome included *Pioneer Days* (1906), featuring a "Band of Full-Blooded Sioux from Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota"; the "Cossack Cavalry" in *The Battle of Port Arthur* (1908); "Twenty-four Bedouin Arabs" (1907); and "Onaip, the Hindu Mystery" (1908).[61] However, the Māori in *Inside the Earth* complicated the confluence of uncivilized, exotic, and unknown culture with their precision and skill; they could be both fierce and poetic, hard and soft, loud and lilting. By appearing wild though contained, the threatening nature perceived of the Other diminished behind the proscenium arch. In the context of expressions of other indigenous cultures that audiences had come to expect, the songs, tight and precise movement formations, graceful *poi*, skilled acting, and arresting physicality of the Māori entertained more than threatened[62] (fig. 3).

The presentational nature of these dances, where performers stood or sat in lines all facing the front of the stage, demonstrated the adaptation of these expressions of culture for the proscenium arch while also reflecting historical accuracy: *haka* had long been performed while standing in rows with a front-facing perspective. Of course, the *haka* and *poi* seen at the Hippodrome and directed by Burnside aimed to entertain and reflected the adaptation of these expressions of colonized cultures. Susan Reed believes

[57] *Passaic Daily News*, September 11, 1909; *New York Commercial*, September 5, 1909.

[58] *New York Times*, September 5, 1909, 9.

[59] *World*, November 28, 1909. George M. Cohan was described by the *New York Times* (November 6, 1942, 20) as the "first man of American Theatre." Both E. H. Sothern, a Shakespearian actor during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Cohan, a singer, dancer, and songwriter on the Broadway stage, epitomized the male popular actor of the era.

[60] May Mackenzie, in *Club Fellow*, September 15, 1909.

[61] Epstein, *The New York Hippodrome*, 348–53.

[62] Desmond, *Staging Tourism*, 17.

Figure 2. Drawing of men's *haka* as they appeared on the Hippodrome stage. The detail of muscular upper bodies echoed May Mackenzie's comment in *Club Fellow* that not "an ounce of superfluous flesh" was visible on the men. (Source: R. H. Burnside Collection, series 7, scrapbook 1909–10, p. 205, box 57, Billy Rose Theatre Division, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York Public Library, New York City.)

that dances of colonized peoples, once central in rituals and ceremonies, are contextualized and redefined when transferred to the stage.[63] Māori themselves contributed to this recontextualization. Reverend Bennett, the selector of this group, had previously agitated for the "purification of the national dances of the Maori" when he addressed an audience at a performance by Māori that he directed in New Zealand the previous year.[64] In New York the performance of *poi* in *Inside the Earth* was read by audiences and critics as precise chorus work within the context of other Hippodrome shows and the musical varieties of Times Square.

Popular, contemporary choreographed chorus lines of women, such as those in the Ziegfeld Follies or the Tiller Girls, combined melodic singing with precision steps, kicks, and arm movements. In these choruses, as in *haka* and *poi*, rhythm, timing, and harmony were most important. Comparisons made among the movements, formations, and rhythm of the canoe *poi* and *haka* and these popular chorus lines were therefore not unfounded. Although the language, form, and movement vocabulary of the *poi* and *haka* were unfamiliar, their presentation in performance easily manifested as versions

[63] Susan A. Reed, *Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual, and Politics in Sri Lanka* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 99.

[64] *Evening Post*, July 16, 1908, 2.

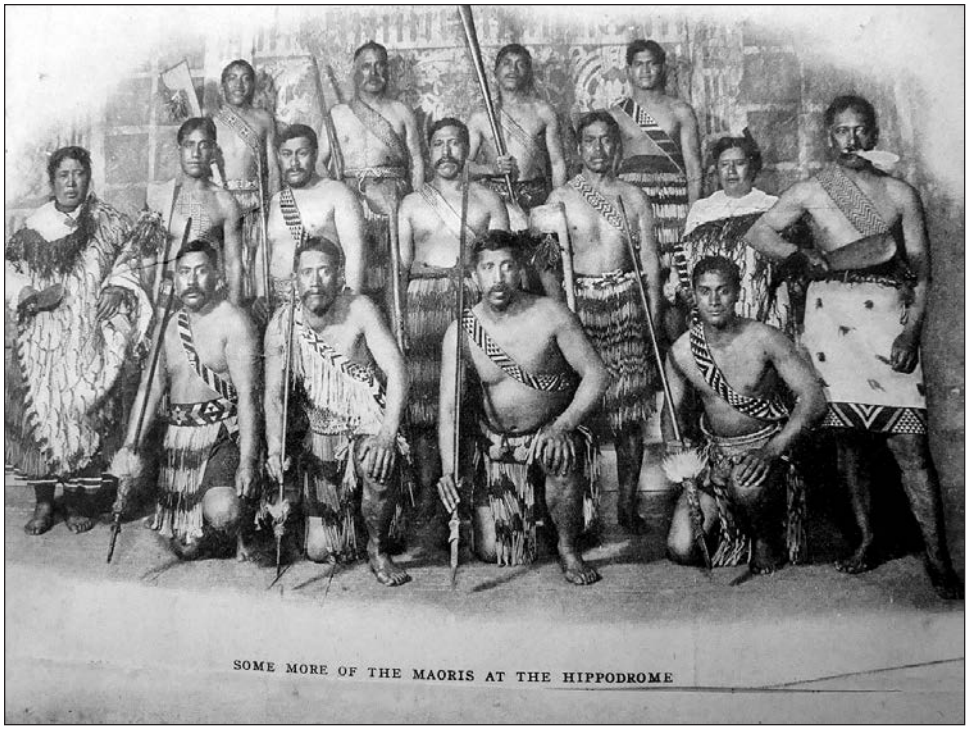

Figure 3. Publicity photograph taken onstage at the Hippodrome: Kiri Matao is standing on the left, Kiwi Amohau on the right (1909). (Source: *New York Life*, September 23, 1909, in R. H. Burnside Collection, series 7, scrapbook 1909–10, n.p., box 57, in Billy Rose Theatre Division, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York Public Library, New York City.)

of popular chorus work. As an example of the process of hybridization of culture, the movements and vocal skills of the group reflected the injection of forms of presentation called for at tourist sites at home while also ostensibly instigating innovations in New York. The reviewer writing in the *Sun* compared the Māori performance to the best that Broadway offered: "their efforts teach the audience to believe that some time in the dim past Kiralfy . . . Julian Mitchell . . . Hugh Ford and every other stage manager who ever has directed dancing choruses must have been in New Zealand and there picked up the chorus girl steps that we've been seeing ever since on Broadway."[65] These comparisons to current dance forms seen on New York stages and linked with displays of savagery encouraged audiences to interpret Māori as both modern and primitive, capable of entertaining with their combination of precision and abandonment. This loop in the exchange of movements, choreography, and form highlights the corporeal developments in cultural hybridity at this time, with indigenous expression moving toward entertainment and theatrical devices being incorporated into "traditional" movement and song. Changes in Māori cultural expression as a result of its presence

[65] *Sun*, September 5, 1909, 7. Imre Kiralfy, known for his opulent Broadway and London productions, is credited with introducing astonishing dance and scenic effects, including electric lighting, to theatres. See Larry Stempel, *Showtime: A History of the Broadway Musical Theater* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 78.

in Manhattan can be seen in developments in movement, musical compositions, and presentations throughout the twentieth century.[66]

The Māori in the Museum and at the Ballot Box

Given the amount of publicity and favorable reviews that the Māori entertainers gained, it is not surprising that interest in them extended beyond their performance capabilities in the context of contemporary race-thinking. In the quest to acquire knowledge of other native cultures and customs in the realms of both human and political sciences, two radically different groups approached the Māori performers, seeking their assistance to boost their respective cultural, social, and political agendas. Anthropologists and advocates for women's rights sought out the New Zealanders in order to further their own interests regarding race and politics.

As the field of anthropology developed in the early twentieth century it incorporated older pseudosciences like phrenology and mesmerism. Phrenology, the "radical science of mind," consisted of taking skull measurements to determine the "relative strengths of intellectual qualities and emotions."[67] The practice of casting heads of indigenous people aligned with the scientific movement of comparative anatomical analysis, popular since the eighteenth century. This "science" aimed to establish the intellectual capabilities among races by measuring the shape and size of various skulls. As Paul Turnbull, a historian of racial science, explains, the shape and size of the skull of "'savage races' . . . was a reliable indicator of the relative strength of intellectual powers and emotion in the individual mind."[68] In January 1910 the *New York Times* reported that the directors of the anthropology department of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) visited the Hippodrome to "see the Haka dances given by the New Zealand Maoris."[69] Prior to their attendance at the theatre some performers were invited to the museum to examine some of the Māori "taonga (treasures) and artifacts in [the museum's] collection, in order to better identify them and to have their photographs taken."[70] While there, head and body casts of some performers were created, with accounts of this process relayed in the New York newspapers: "two straws [placed] in the chief's nostrils, with sufficient cotton wool at the ends of the straws to keep them in position. The wet plaster was then applied to his face till nothing could be seen but the two straws through which he breathed. A towel was then placed over Kiwi's head and a white sheet thrown over his body. For fifteen minutes he was compelled to sit motionless."[71] Another report, headlined "Takes Casts of Maori Head.

[66] Prevalent in clubs, schools, urban *marae*, and fundraising events and increasingly an activity that became competitive, by the 1970s *kapa haka*, or group dances for entertainment, had become "a distinctive way of Māori performing." *Waiata* and *haka* were composed using existing Western melodies though with new lyrics and accompanied by guitar, reflecting personal and local histories and sung in *te reo Māori*. This evolution of "traditional" corporeal expression of Māori culture has culminated in a biennial competition known as *Te Matatini*—the national *kapa haka* festival, which in 2015 attracted more than 1,800 performers and 10,000 spectators over four days. See Hector Kaiwai and Kirsten Zemke-White, "Kapa Haka as a 'Web of Cultural Meanings," in *Cultural Studies in Aotearoa New Zealand*, ed. Claudia Bell and Steve Matthewman (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2004), 139–60.

[67] Paul Turnbull, "British Anatomists, Phrenologists and the Construction of the Aboriginal Race, c.1790–1830," *History Compass* 5, no. 1 (2006): 26–50, quote on 28.

[68] Ibid., 39.

[69] *New York Times*, January 21, 1910, 11.

[70] *Ohinemutu Informer* 82 (January 2007): 27.

[71] *Bridgeport Post*, January 24, 1910. As far as is known at present, the cast of chief Amohau's head still resides at the AMNH, although my own attempts to locate it have been unsuccessful. The grand-

American Museum Professor Induces Chief to Sit," described Kiwi's discomfort during the castings, the distress caused among those watching, and the incentive to continue with the process. It is likely that these members of Te Arawa had never witnessed a cast being taken; therefore, with the outcome and effects unknown, the apprehension displayed by Kiwi and those watching was understandable:

> Kiwi, the chief, submitted to having the cast made until the wet plaster began to harden, when he suddenly became impatient and would have destroyed the result had he not been persuaded by his manager to remain quiet until Professor Lowie removed the cast. Several members of the tribe watched the operation with astonishment and alarm. On being told however that he would be paid for submitting to the discomfort Kiwi agreed to return and have a cast made of his body.[72]

It is not clear why Amohau agreed to undertake this procedure. A report in a New Zealand newspaper states that the manager of the group, Mr. Whyte, was approached by the AMNH to assist in its plan to "form a special department devoted to the South Seas."[73] Perhaps coerced by Whyte, several members of the group also had photographs taken at the museum. These consisted of formal poses with members dressed in a combination of traditional *kahu* (kiwi-feathered cloaks) and European clothing. In one, Amohau, standing alongside two seated *wāhine* (one of whom being identified as Rineha), is dressed in a three-piece suit complete with gold watch chain. Separated from their stage personas, the Māori performers assumed identities as subjects of the British Crown. The photographs taken of the *rōpū* at the AMNH contrasted with the representation of Māori being performed a few blocks south, at the Hippodrome. Juxtaposing the reports of the "wild gyrations" of the women and the *piupiu* of the men "sensitive to breezes," the serene, still, and serious gaze of the men and women captured on film portrayed the sartorial evidence of assimilation while also perhaps displaying the agency of the performers as Māori of the twentieth century, whose dignity, gravity, and contemporary dress might be read as assertions of their presence as citizens of modern society.

Māori women also took central roles in political events in New York City. Advertisements for the Hippodrome boasting that the "SAVAGE SUFFRAGETTES are actual voters in their New Zealand home" and a visit to New York by the "mother of the militant movement of women"—British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst—offered a platform on which their status as voters could be displayed. As reported in the *New York Times*, "New York has never seen such a gathering of women as that which was brought together last night at Carnegie Hall to listen to Mrs. Pankhurst. . . . The big house, which seats 3,000 people, was packed to the doors. . . . It was a remarkable gathering of women of many professions."[74] When Pankhurst arrived for her inaugural visit to the United States she chose three Māori women from the Hippodrome cast to share the platform with her at a massive rally in Carnegie Hall on October 25. The three—Kiri Matao, Waapi, and Erana—were celebrated as symbols of the female suffrage movement, and in the process challenged US and British notions of race and

daughter of Kiwi, Iwaiwa Bonnie Amohau, has said that she had no knowledge of this event having occurred while her grandfather was in New York. Moreover, she understands that the events during 1909–10 were never discussed among *whanau* of the next generation in Rotorua. Iwaiwa Bonnie Amohau, interview with author, July 8, 2011, Rotorua.

[72] *New York Press*, January 19, 1910.

[73] *Poverty Bay Herald*, March 3, 1910, 4.

[74] *New York Times*, October 26, 1909, 1.

gender politics. For Pankhurst, the presence and visibility of the Māori women onstage and in newspaper reports demonstrated that even nonwhite women from distant lands were capable of voting and challenging Americans' own discriminatory policies against women, Native Americans, and African Americans.

Public knowledge surrounding the Māori women was complex; the "savage suffragettes" suggested that women could participate in the democratic process regardless of race or class, yet, as colonized people of the British Empire, they enjoyed a privilege of citizenship that British women at home did not. All New Zealand women, including Māori, gained the right to vote in 1893. The enfranchisement of these women struck a chord with Americans and highlighted the differences not only between themselves and New Zealanders, but also between New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The layers of meaning deepened with the conflation of their stage personas and that of enfranchised women.

Referring to the women as they appeared in *Inside the Earth* "clad in a skirt made of woven rushes with a spangled bodice and carrying murderous weapons made of greenstone," the report merged their performance personas with their experience of obtaining the franchise, concluding that "they suggest that their methods have been more militant than is actually the case."[75] Introducing the stage personas of the women into the debate on female suffrage both elucidated and confused comprehension of the Māori. For instance, the black-and-white feathers of the huia bird, worn in the hair of the women onstage, signified *mana* (prestige) within the *iwi* (tribe), as well as serving as an adornment of beauty; however, the historical significance of the huia feather was lost on the US press.[76] Conjectures that "[p]ossibly the feather is the emblem of equal suffrage, and New York may yet see a similar trophy waving proudly aloft from pompadours of her social queens" implied that symbols of Māori suffrage might soon be adopted by Americans.[77] Although the meaning of the feather adornment was misunderstood, the women's association with Pankhurst carried with it significant exposure for both the Māori and New Zealand.

The *wāhine* chosen to accompany Pankhurst ("Kiri Matao, widow of a Maori chief who has voted twenty years"; "Waapi, who has cast her vote for parliamentary delegates, and Erana, political leader and advocate of prohibition") represented the variations of age, interest, and experience among the group.[78] In reports related to female suffrage in New Zealand, New York newspapers emphasized that the "dusky suffragettes are little burdened by either political responsibilities or Paris fashions."[79] Since the path to universal suffrage for women was relatively unknown in the United States at this time (white women in the state of Wyoming had been able to vote since 1869, followed by Colorado, Utah, and Idaho by 1900), details on the process of suffrage fascinated. Thus, the report in the *Evening World* concluded that "as a matter of fact, the Maori women's right to vote has upon the election of two members of parliament been handed her without a struggle."[80]

[75] *Evening World*, September 13, 1909.

[76] *The Encyclopedia of New Zealand* explains that huia feathers were worn in the hair of high-ranking people and kept in a wooden chest called a *waka huia*. The huia has been extinct since the early twentieth century; see *http:www.teara.govt.nz/en/nga-manu-birds*.

[77] *Evening World*, September 13, 1909.

[78] *Sun*, November 7, 1909, 26.

[79] *Evening World*, September 13, 1909.

[80] Ibid.

Coinciding with the Māori appearance at the Hippodrome, the situation of female workers in New York City reached a crisis point in 1909. Some 23,000 factory seamstresses, predominately young immigrant women, went on strike for better working conditions and pay. As a consequence of their actions, a rally in support of the striking Shirtwaist factory workers, organized by the wife of Oliver Belmont, was held at the Hippodrome in December 1909.[81] On this occasion the theatre was filled to overflowing with workers, suffragists, trade unionists, religious and cultural leaders, and the *wāhine* Māori, who featured prominently two months earlier at Carnegie Hall's Pankhurst rally. As reported in the *World*, "[i]n many respects this suffragette-striker mass meeting was remarkable. It is the first time there ever was such a gathering in New York."[82] While the focus of the rally was the conditions of the striking workers, messages proclaimed at the gathering echoed the earlier Pankhurst rally, with demands for women's suffrage ringing through the auditorium. Banners hung from the walls—"Give Women the Protection of the Vote" and "Votes for Women"—confirmed the allegiance between the union organizers and the suffragists.[83]

Coverage of the gathering highlighted the Māori presence at the rally. The front page of the *World* featured a drawing of six Māori women wearing high-buttoned white blouses and large hats, announcing that "among those prominent on the platform were several Maori women who vote at home and who are members of the Hippodrome company," including Waapi and Queen Kiri. For women like Matao, coming from a tradition where *whakapapa* (genealogy) prescribed rank and hierarchy (sometimes regardless of gender), the notion of women's rights and position within a society were understood differently from the way that they were perceived in Western societies. Within tribal structures and on *marae*, Māori women assumed positions of power and participated in land ownership and management decisions.

Again, as reported in the *Sun*, the Māori women from *Inside the Earth* were called on to represent the achievements of women's suffrage. The newspaper explained that among the "six thousand or more women" in the auditorium, sitting at the front of the stage was "Mrs. Oliver H. P. Belmont, . . . Mrs. Rangitikei, wife of Mr. Rangitikei of New Zealand, . . . [and] Professor Julius Hopp, founder of the Coddington School of Art and Drama." Between speeches made by union officials and members of the clergy, "women's suffrage was brought in only incidentally. . . . At such times the Maoris in box 2 at the left of the house applauded violently. They took a chance years ago and haven't regretted it, apparently."[84] This massive gathering of progressive thinkers highlighted the differences between the relative comfort that enfranchised women experienced in New Zealand and the obstacles still to be surmounted by American women of all races and cultures.

Conclusion

The identification of groups of people by gestures, posture, movement, and vocal expression, along with styles of dress, physical appearance, and political activity, are at the center of this exploration of Māori in Manhattan. Most importantly, an examination

[81] "Shirtwaist" described the style of women's blouses of the day. See Epstein, *The New York Hippodrome*, for a complete list of the events at the venue.

[82] *World*, December 6, 1909.

[83] *New York Times*, December 6, 1909, 1.

[84] *Sun*, December 6, 1909.

of this nine-month engagement of forty Māori from Rotorua reveals how New Zealand and Māori took shape in the eyes of thousands of Americans in the early twentieth century. The *haka*, *poi*, costumes, and scenic designs onstage at the Hippodrome during 1909–10 not only placed Māori *within* New Zealand, but they also created and fixed these creative expressions *as* New Zealand. By the early twentieth century, the cultural expression of indigenous peoples melded into elaborate storylines and spectacular dramas in the United States. Although the desire for ever-more-ferocious "real" savagery onstage is what drove the Hippodrome to issue the invitation to the Rotorua performers and inspired Burnside to incorporate Māori into his musical drama, it was the performers' physicality and skill as entertainers that was commented on by the US theatre critics. The precision of the canoe *poi* and the rhythm and unison of the *haka*, regarded by Americans as well-rehearsed and -choreographed chorus work, are what impressed most. From New Yorkers' perspectives, as objects of anthropological inquiry and symbols of women's rights, the Māori assumed roles outside of the ones they portrayed twice daily at the Hippodrome. Events offstage augmented knowledge of Māori and created visions of New Zealand as a progressive, enlightened, and civilized member of the British Empire, albeit peopled with "savage suffragettes" and men who could dress in three-piece suits and flax-reed skirts.

Lacking accounts other than Amohau's correspondence, it is difficult to unpack the motivations behind the performers involvement with this enterprise. New Zealand's geographical and cultural distance from North America may have piqued their curiosity; moreover, as performers, an opportunity to perform on the world's largest stage would be appealing. The Māori custom of recording history orally and through *waiata* in *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) also contributes to the inaccessibility of this history to non-Māori speakers and researchers.

Events that began with the visit of the US naval fleet to New Zealand in 1908 resulted in the introduction of Māori and New Zealand in New York during the following year. Approximately 2.5 million Americans attended the nine-month run of *Inside the Earth* at the Hippodrome. As the *New Zealand Herald* reported, the performers from *Inside the Earth* created a perception of New Zealand and Māori in the United States that was unprecedented: "If New Zealand was but little known in America before, it is well-known now."[85] The reliance upon *haka* and *poi* to conjure an entire nation demonstrates the power inherent in these forms of cultural expression. The "harmony of frenzy" witnessed in the passionate though precise stage work of the Māori communicated unfamiliar, yet pleasing and entertaining examples of cultural expression. Within the fantastic world manufactured on the Hippodrome stage, the visceral performances of Māori culture joined past and present and real and imagined people and places to provide new sensations for the "dulled palates of New York theatre-goers."

[85] *New Zealand Herald*, October 11, 1909, 7.