Mau Kōrari – Traditional Māori Martial Art Training Incorporating American and European Contemporary Dance Forms

Tānemahuta Gray with Jenny Stevenson

Abstract This paper describes the development of a new movement form, Mau Kōrari, unique to Aotearoa New Zealand and named for the Harakeke or flax-bush stem that is integral to its practice. Mau Kōrari's relevance and application in education has been evaluated both within the context of the New Zealand Arts curriculum in schools and through a series of public workshops presented to a broad cross-section of the community. Mau Kōrari combines elements of Mau Rākau (the traditional Māori martial art form) with contemporary dance forms including hip hop and krumping. The Mau Kōrari form was first created as a method to facilitate the teaching of basic te reo Māori (Māori language) and to enhance student knowledge about tikanga concepts (Māori protocols and cultural ideas). The paper details the benefits to learners that have been observed over many years of teaching the form and through feedback from participants and observers. Of particular interest is the silent teaching form of Mau Kōrari in which instruction is communicated to the students through physical demonstration of the movements in total silence.

Keywords Mau Kōrari • Mau Rākau • Martial arts • Flax-bush stem • tikanga Māori • te reo Māori • Silent teaching form

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By Tānemahuta Gray (with Jenny Stevenson)
Ko Io Matua Te Kore anake
We acknowledge Io Matua the creator of all things
Ko Rangi, ko Papa, ko Rongo, Ko Tāne Mahuta, ko Tawhirimātea
We acknowledge the sky, earth, cultivated foods, forest realm and the wind realm.
Hōmai ōu taonga matauranga, ōu taonga wairua, ōu taonga aroha.

T. Gray (✉)
Taki Rua Productions, 7 Rutherford Drive, Waikanae 5036, New Zealand
e-mail: tanemahuta.gray@gmail.com

J. Stevenson
Taki Rua Productions, P.O. Box 98, Helensville, Auckland 0840, New Zealand
e-mail: jennystevenson1@gmail.com

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Pass down to us this treasure of knowledge, spirituality and love
Hōmai tō kōrari kia mātou
Pass down to us the Flax stem
Hei uru mauri me te mana wairua
To uphold the life force and spirituality that will settle within us
E manaaki ana i a mātou i tēnei wā
Protect us on this journey of training.
Rite tonu me tū mātou ki te poutoko
And let us stand like the supporting pole of the meeting house
Ki te whaiao, ki te ao marama e
Bringing us into the world of light
Tihei Mauri Ora!
Tis life and breath for us all
Karakia (invocation) to prepare for working with the Kōrari (lightweight fighting staff)

1 Introduction

For many years now, I have been developing, refining and teaching the Mau Kōrari training method which comprises the melding of a Māori martial art form with a variety of contemporary dance styles that have their origins in the United States and Europe. I have named it Kōrari after the lightweight flax stem that is used as a fighting staff when executing the form. Growing out of the strict training regime of traditional Taiaha (long fighting staff) of Mau Rākau (Māori martial arts with traditional weapons) the form has now been taught to over 7200 people since 1995.

I have not limited Mau Kōrari training to any one particular social group. It has been taught in kohanga reo (total immersion Māori language programme for young children: from birth to 6 years), primary and secondary schools, as well as to tertiary performing arts students, teachers and the general public (both nationally and internationally).

In their paper, *Indigenous epistemology in a national curriculum framework*? Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito and Bateman discuss "theorizing from within a Māori worldview" (2008, p. 107). This description epitomises the approach that I took in creating the Mau Kōrari practice.

> In contrast to the western/European metaphors of human development and learning, a recent bicultural early childhood education document draws on a distinctive Māori metaphor of weaving together different strands (knowledge bases, beliefs, values, relationships and practices (2008, p. 108).

The inspiration to develop the Kōrari form came about initially when I was trying to find a way to teach basic te reo Māori (Māori language) and impart knowledge about tikanga concepts (Māori protocols and cultural ideas) including mihimihi (personal identity and connections) and atua (the metaphysical world). The first

target group was a class of secondary school students who were just starting their journey in te ao Māori (the Māori worldview), and the challenge I set myself was to find a physically interactive way to make learning te reo Māori an enjoyable experience.

I decided on an integrated style of teaching as a way to encourage students to learn in a manner that would come easily to them. In discussing this teaching approach with regards to early childhood education, Pigdon and Woolley (1992, p. 1) state:

> An integrated approach allows learners to explore, gather, process, refine and present information about topics they want to investigate without the constraints imposed by traditional subject barriers.

This aligns with my own teaching practice which is loosely based on my experience as a student, encompassing both the rigours of the traditional training I received when studying Mau Rākau combined with my dance training in both classical ballet and contemporary dance (Martha Graham and José Limón styles) which has encouraged artistic exploration, creativity, interpretive freedom and improvisation. My own bi-cultural upbringing, (Māori and New Zealand European) has prepared me to embrace the integration of two such culturally diverse and contrasting training approaches into my own teaching practice.

The training that is received in Mau Rākau engenders an obligation to pass on the knowledge to others, but I wanted to achieve this with a format that could have relevance across the spectrum of students: to both male and female, Māori and non-Māori alike and also to provide opportunities for students to participate in creativity and experimentation which is not a salient feature of Mau Rākau (traditional Māori martial art training).

Mau Taiaha is a staff-fighting martial art-form, which includes strikes, blocks, parries and disarming movements similar to Asian weaponry martial fighting styles. It is a senior form of Mau Rākau, in which the requirements are demanding at all levels of human development. Mau Kōrari (which uses the lightweight flax stem as a "lightweight staff") is very much the teina or younger sibling of Mau Taiaha, but I saw the possibility of using it as a stepping stone to build the physical flexibility and skills that would be advantageous for further training either in Mau Taiaha or in dance, (or both) depending on the student's abilities and preferences. It also seemed to be the perfect vehicle for teaching te reo Māori (Māori language) in conjunction with the culture and history of Māori.

2 Mau Rākau Training

My formal training in Mau Rākau was undertaken through the art of Mau Taiaha, when I was tutored in two different styles of this fighting form. The first was under the mantle of Koro Mita Hikairo Mohi (Ngāti Rangiwewehi), in which most of my education took place on Mokoia Island in Rotorua, and in other training wananga

(camps) around the North and South Islands. The second style which I studied, was under the guidance and leadership of Hēmi Te Peeti (Ngāti Whakatere, Te Arawa) through his training group Te Ngū o te Wheke (The Silent Movement of the Squid).

Mita Mohi and his whānau (family) taught a style that involved mastering the five strands of development before being deemed sufficiently prepared to undertake training at Kura Wero (a training school to learn the art of the formal challenge which is known as the wero within the Pōwhiri or formal greeting process). It should be emphasised that this style of martial art was taught with peaceful intentions, as the traditional cultural form has now moved into a more focused position aimed at keeping alive the art-form, the language and cultural protocols and ensuring that they are passed on for future generations to maintain into the future.

The first strand of the form taught by Mita Mohi is Ngā Āhei: the on-guard positions and fighting stances from which a trained warrior can choose to execute their strikes and blocks. These stances and placement of the Rākau (the length of wood used for Taiaha/Mau Rākau) provide the base from which all the next phases of movements stem. It also includes preparation for a Taiaha Warrior to move from Noa (a state of calm and a non-combative position) to Tapu (the sacred space where a Warrior is ready to fight or prepare for ceremonial activity, such as wero or challenge).

When executing this strand of movement, the student or warrior is brought to the position of toropaepae, the middle ground between Ranginui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku (Sky Father and Earth Mother) so that karakia (invocations) can be given to take the student into the martial realm of Tū-mata-uenga, the Māori god of warfare (as recognised throughout most of Aotearoa, New Zealand).

On attaining this spiritual and emotional state, the student is then ready to learn the fighting forms and aspects of movement of Tū-mata-uenga, and the creation myth in which Tū held the son (Akerautangi who was the physical manifestation of a weapon) passed to him by his cousin Rurutangiakau, in order to defeat his brother Rongo Maraeroa (God of Peace and cultivated crops), in their dispute over the plot of land named Pōhutukawa. The weapon that he was gifted on this occasion personified by Akerautangi had two heads and four eyes (in order to be able to see in a 360° perspective) and a protruding tongue (representing the defiant spirit of the warrior). It was the prototype for the Taiaha as we know it today, constructed from the wood of the native New Zealand Akeake tree.

The rest of the movements within the strand of Ngā Āhei are concerned with building the mana (confidence and prestige) of the warrior, so that he starts to learn about who he is, and where he comes from. This is achieved through the study of traditional stories and history, complemented by their accompanying names and movements. This aspect of the training is designed to add layers of understanding, knowledge of identity and a sense of belonging within the Māori cultural sphere.

Photo: Stephen A'Court – Ngarino Watt (pictured)
Maui – One Man Against the Gods: Te Ao Mārama Tāpui (2011)

The next three strands of training passed on by Mita Mohi were: Ngā Paoa, or the strikes that are used to inflict damage to all parts of the opposition's body; Ngā Karo, the blocking of those strikes; and the combinations, Ngā Kurua, which are taught once the warrior becomes more adept. Repetition in practising and learning these moves is paramount in the instruction, so that the body (tinana), mind (hinengaro) and spirit (wairua) can receive and process the movements, etching them into the whole being of the warrior who is working the Rākau.

The fifth strand is Nga Tā or the ceremonial movements, which include footwork and a variety of combinations of blocks and strikes that provide the more extensive range of movement necessary for the wero or formal challenge. The flexibility and strength of the warrior's wrists, arms and body together with the agility of the footwork, should by this stage be highly developed, in order for the warrior to deliver the wero. The physical movement must begin to work organically, with the warrior's focus being on entry into the spiritual realm that is required within the training of Te Kura Wero (the formal challenge training school).

Wero School is the place where all the discipline and repetition of movements are taken to the next level. This includes pushing the body to extreme levels of physical exhaustion, in order to move the mind from the physical training space, into the spiritual domain. In addition, the warrior is required to understand the moves at a much deeper level in order to develop a platform from which to develop his own combinations and figures (within a rigorous Wero movement structure) and to demonstrate an individual style.

Photo: Stephen A'Court – Ngarino Watt (pictured)
Maui – One Man Against the Gods: Te Ao Mārama Tāpui (2011)

The warrior's entry into a higher state of being on a spiritual level, entails entering into a transformed state (evoking the spirit of the War God Tū-mata-uenga and the warrior's own ancestral lineage). This facilitates the connection to ancestral whakapapa (genealogies, lineage or stories) to assist them through the tapu (sacred) state inherent in executing the wero (challenge). This training is open only to men and to those male teenagers who have passed through puberty and have demonstrated the necessary physical, emotional and spiritual maturity to be able to tackle such arduous training components and participate in such an advanced level of instruction.

The second style of Mau Rākau instruction which I was extremely privileged to learn under the mantle of Hēmi Te Peeti, includes many of the same forms described above. In addition it covers tuition in how to melee (undertake close combat scenarios) in fight training and to learn moves that are based on the movement characteristics of the animal kingdom. These actions emerge from the realm of Tāne Mahuta (the forest domain) and Tangaroa (the sea domain).

I spent a shorter period of time learning this style of Mau Rākau, yet it emphasised clearly for me the connection the form has with the elemental and natural world. Studying this practice has corroborated my own belief that we are all connected to the cycle of the elements, from which we can continue to learn.

The style of movement that Hēmi shared with his students had a more contemporary shape to the figures (even though it came from an ancient understanding of

the natural world) and I found that it opened my mind to the possibility of being even more adventurous in the movement choices that Mau Rākau (stick martial fighting form) had to offer.

An aspect of the training practice that Hēmi Te Peeti shared, which was very influential on me, was the manner in which he taught new moves within Te Ngū: a silent teaching form. In this method all the instruction is communicated to the students through the physical demonstration of the movements in total silence, using the eyes and the head to drive the tuition. Following my initial induction into the form (which lasted for 2½ h), I discovered that I was able to shut down the questioning and "chattering" portion of my mind and instead, build a meditative, constructive experience.

This type of follow-the-leader process encourages a silent trust between teacher and student. The whole room slows down into a concentrated and contemplative stillness and the intensity of focused energy is palpable within the room. It is a unique experience, which I have discovered can create a very sacred space for instruction to take place.

Photo: Stephen A'Court – Ngarino Watt (pictured)
Maui – One Man Against the Gods: Te Ao Mārama Tāpui (2011)

An additional benefit of this method, which I noticed when I assimilated it into my own teaching practice of Mau Kōrari (lightweight staff), is that it gives an excellent opportunity to gauge rapidly, the concentration abilities of the group. It is possible to discern instantly, whether the group can cope with the stillness and focus that occurs when it is not possible to ask questions and when each person must discover answers through their own application, during the instruction process. This enables me to determine which students will have trouble focusing for long periods of time and those who will be able to manage the intensity of this type of instruction.

In 2013, following a class taught in Wellington to Year 9 students who were approximately 13 years old, a teacher commented in her assessment: "Learning the sequence in silence required the girls to really embrace thinking for themselves. Very positive". (Mau Kōrari Teacher Assessments 2013). Similarly, a class taught in Wellington in 2015, to Year 7 and 8 students who were approximately 11–12 years old, elicited the following comment:

> The tuition style in silence really challenged the students in their ability to concentrate for an extended period of time. The discipline of the working style really pushed the students into a new space that they had not inhabited before (Mau Kōrari Teacher Assessments 2015).

I have also discovered that this type of silent instruction engenders a really strong internal physicalisation of the movements in students, with a marked improvement in retention, for a much longer period of time. The students undergo a unique experience of instruction which is unlikely to be forgotten, due to its mysterious process. Therefore the moves tend to remain in their body memories for a lot longer afterwards. This lends credence to the notion that the silent learning experience of Te Ngū creates an internal embodiment of the movement, which goes beyond the physical and transcends into the spiritual realm. The movement becomes imprinted on the student's wairua (spirit) and therefore is much more likely to remain with the student after the lesson has been completed.

My own personal discovery has been that this process is very similar to that of learning karakia (prayers). On waking up early in the morning to start the process of learning the verses of a karakia through repetition, the body is often reluctant, remaining sluggish and in a sleepy state. Working under these conditions can create stress on the body that in turn aids the muscular memory of the words. When reciting the karakia later, the uncomfortable experience of the initial instruction is recalled and that physicalisation helps the body, mind and spirit to evoke the words and the vibrations of the karakia.

Hēmi also shared the instructional process of Te Ngao, which is a slow form of teaching, where the movement is demonstrated and practised in slow motion, to correct the line and improve the precision of the strikes and blocks. Ideally, as the student progresses, the movement will gradually speed up, with accuracy being retained, as the pace increases. This process (although frustrating for younger students who don't always have the discipline to move slowly for a long period of time), allows for faster progress in the long term, if patience is exhibited in the initial learning process.

Te Ngao also allows the teacher to ensure that the student is moving the Rākau (stick) in the correct pathways for perfect precision and "bite", so that when the moves speed up, the power, flexion and focus form good habits in the mover, by utilising the proper muscles. Te Ngū and Te Ngao are often both combined for a substantial portion of the teaching.

3 The Development of Mau Kōrari (Lightweight Staff Contemporary Martial Art Form)

Having completed my traditional martial arts training, I began to consider the feasibility of combining a more contemporary practice of movement styles and combinations with Mau Rākau (staff martial fighting form), so that it could be used to communicate ideas in a different setting, other than that of the traditional marae (gathering place of people). I realised that if I were to use Mau Rākau in a theatrical setting it would be easier to achieve using the Mau Kōrari form, as it would be less restricted by traditional protocols. I reasoned that it would also enhance the choreographic content for dance students who might be well versed in hip-hop and various contemporary movement forms as the practice would present additional challenges to their movement exploration.

The idea to use the Kōrari flower stems of the Harakeke (native New Zealand flax bush) as a fighting staff was inspired by an initiative already established among contemporary Māori weavers who have used Harakeke to develop multiple new design shapes and forms from both Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā (Māori and European perspectives). By using Kōrari to develop a new martial art movement form that integrated dance influences, it was as though I was being given permission to proceed, by following a pathway already blessed by our kuia and kaumātua weavers (Māori elders).

I soon discovered that the lightness of the flax stem allowed an extra range of movement to be incorporated into the form, that would not have been possible when using a Taiaha or full length Rākau (weapon) which has extra height and weight. Ideally, the Kōrari stick should be standing at the height of the pito (belly button) of the student, measuring from Papa-tū-ā-nuku (the ground). This references the nurturing that we received in the wombs of our biological mothers, and also symbolically represents the nurturing that we receive from the food provided by Papa-tū-ā-nuku (our Earth Mother).

The strands of movement development within the structure of Mau Taiaha (staff fighting form), inspired me to build similar strands for Mau Kōrari, creating a base from which all the movements would stem. To date I have created four such categories within the form. It is possible for all of these tiers to work within each other, as combinations are built from each of the strands, thereby allowing the choreography to develop organically.

This first tier of learning in Mau Kōrari is Ngā Tohutohu (directionals). This tier supports the learning of actions and movements for moving forwards and backwards, side to side, inside and outside, upwards and below, in order to build a dimensional sphere of movement possibilities. It is similar to Leonardo Da Vinci's famous *Vitruvian Man* drawing and creates the base from which the work can then progress down to the ground or up into the air, as it is being developed further.

Ngā Tohutohu, also encourages cohesion within the group, and develops the kapa (group) energy. Moving as one entity creates a powerful energy force, which in turn informs the movements of the group. The moves are not difficult to execute, but there is transference of weight from one leg to the other, as well as balancing. This helps to create an understanding of counter-balancing in movement.

Ngā Mihimihi is the second strand of movement development in Mau Kōrari focusing purely on the elements of the mihimihi or pēpēhā which concern identity (personal introduction). The mihimihi is linked to: the waka (vessels of ancestral migration to Aotearoa); maunga (the mountain that people connect to); awa (the river or body of water important to the health and nurturing of the people); the iwi and hapū (tribal and extended family links); tūpuna (ancestral whakapapa); marae (traditional gathering space of the tribe or hapū); and the ingoa or name of your family. These movements are much more contemporary in form and the dancers must alter their levels: combining ground work with elevation.

The third tier: Ngā Ātua Māori, consists of movements that personify the gods within a Māori world-view, and which hold a nature-based perspective. The combination of contemporary dance and Mau Rākau movements continues to evolve even further in this segment, adopting a bi-cultural choreographic voice, and producing shapes and patterns that personify the elemental potency of these Atua (gods or spirits), such as Tāne Mahuta, God of the forest and Tangaroa, God of the oceans.

The phrases in this section assume a similar role to the ceremonial movements of Nga Tā in Mau Rākau (staff martial art form): increasing the number of movements while abbreviating the length of the phrase, which encourages explorative choreography. One example of a dance work that I have developed in this context, concerns the Sky-father, Ranginui. Using a line from a Haka chant (traditional war cry and/or dance), I created movement to express a section of his story. The words from the Haka chant were "Ko Ranginui e tū iho nei", referring to Rangi who stands above us. The movement I choreographed to accompany this chant, began with Tū Haka stance (equivalent to second position grand-plié in classical ballet). The hands of the dancer are spread to the edges of the kōrari and then, via the heel of the hands, the kōrari is lifted into the sky.

The resulting image references the story of Tāne Mahuta raising the Sky-father, Ranginui into the heavens with his legs and feet, separating him from the embrace of his wife Papa-tū-ā-nuku. These actions of Tāne Mahuta brought light into the world and instigated the next stage of the earth's development, so the movements of this phrase resonate on multiple levels, (both physically and within their cultural context), thereby helping students to understand the stories and history behind Māori philosophy and mythology.

The fourth strand of Mau Kōrari: Kōmitimiti, opens up the form to encourage choreographic freedom and the merging together of movements and combinations. Group formations allow exploration of a full range of themes, ideas and processes to express any kaupapa (subject) inspirational to the choreographer. It is a form of expression that is uniquely Māori, but when combined with other dance forms to create new styles of movement, it also has the potential to relate stories and themes from divergent cultural contexts.

Students who have had previous choreographic experience obviously have more success in creating their own movement in other dance forms. I have found when teaching workshops that some students relish the freedom to explore, while others become completely frozen at the prospect of having to create their own movement phrases using a combination of contemporary and traditional dance. Quite often it is those students who have only experienced traditional Māori movement that struggle the most to express themselves through blending the different elements.

In my personal exploration of fusing Mau Rākau with contemporary dance forms, I have used elements of North American hip-hop and krumping battles (which are in turn based on African ritualistic dances) as an inspiration. I wanted to see if the combination of these elements could evolve into a style of movement which is unique to Aotearoa, while still incorporating influences from other parts of the world. Through experimenting in this way, I discovered that the high energy levels inherent in the blend of combative martial art and dance, mirrors the highly competitive nature of street-dance "battles". It demonstrated to me that indigenously-based choreography could initiate social interaction in the community, through creating dance challenges with an Aotearoa (New Zealand) flavour.

This concept was first established in the "Haka Battlez" competitions brought to Wellington in 2006 by Kereama Te Ua (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMq6aw3TWfo), who perceived that this social contact and the element of challenging one another" was a good way to bring youth together. The idea was to battle it out using a Haka-influenced (traditional Māori Dance form) movement vocabulary, that differs from those dance styles traditionally seen in the World Championship dance battles.

I have also found inspiration in the movement formations of the animal kingdom, when working with dance groups onstage. A prime example would be the mimicking of the formations of the Mangopare (Hammerhead Shark) and the manner in which they fight in groups with a determination never to give up on the battle until such time as they perish. The way that this image can influence dancers to move through space, attacking and parrying in combinations, often results in new and innovative methods of constructing group formations. Whakataukī (Māori proverbs) provide the inspiration for these choreographic developments to be guided by the wisdom of ancient insights and cautions:

> Kaua e mate wheke, e mate ururoa – Do not die like an Octopus with no resistance, but die like a hammerhead shark that fights to the bitter end.

Māori design and in particular, the motifs of traditional Māori Kōwhaiwhai (ornamental painted patterning) and tā moko (tattoo body design) provide visual

inspiration to bring these patterns and shapes into context. I have found this to be particularly helpful when working on choreographic forms and formations. This type of choreographic process combines both a European creative approach of using images to inspire movement, with a Māori perspective, in which traditional motifs and patterns are used to explore how the body can move through the space and also how a group can create shape and form through their onstage placement.

Contemporary Kowhaiwhai pattern of Mangopare and other designs used for tā moko. Permalink: http://www.tattootribes.com/index.php?idinfo=1475 (Accessed 16/08/2014)

Traditional Kowhaiwhai design of Mangopare. http://www.maori.org.nz/whakairo/default.php?pid=sp55&parent=52 (Accessed 16/08/2014)

4 Martial Arts Programmes in Schools

In recent times there has been interest in the United States in particular, in providing martial arts programmes in schools, as a key to developing self-confidence in students. At present most martial arts training is undertaken by students through after-school programmes in the States and in many other parts of the world, including Aotearoa (New Zealand). In her work *Case study: Martial arts for self confidence in schools*, Miles (n.d.) states: "Since it has been so difficult to incorporate martial arts into our public school systems, many programs are outside of the traditional classroom" (p. 6). She poses the question: "Why isn't martial arts a part of every schools (sic) curriculum? Does Eurocentricism still control our curriculum, and is it not accepted because martial arts is (sic) an Asian thing?"

Miles argues for the inclusion of martial arts in the physical education programmes of schools, although she does not espouse any particular form. She cites the (then) Senator Obama's "initiative in 2007 to improve standards for physical education and to include martial arts in public schools" (p. 3), although this bill never became law. She also details twenty ways that martial arts can build confidence in students, quoting the benefits as expressed by martial arts teacher Master John Matthew Klein who teaches karate to children. These benefits include:

> 1) Learns body postures, eye contact and other movements typical of a confident student……. and:
> 12) Learn to accept mistakes as a part of learning
> 13) Students learn limits and boundaries, because strict rules in the practice room are understood by the students for their own safety. (Miles, p. 6)

These specific benefits as cited by Miles, resonate strongly with me, as I have observed similar improvements in students, when teaching Mau Kōrari (lightweight staff contemporary martial art form). I have found this to be the case particularly with those students who have encountered challenges in concentration when studying academic subjects, but more especially with Māori students, who identify strongly and feel an affinity with the work and who often excel in the practice.

I suggest that Mau Kōrari has great potential in terms of its introduction into schools in Aotearoa, combining as it does the creativity of dance with the discipline of martial arts while teaching students not only te reo Māori (Māori language), but also the valuable life-lessons of tikanga Māori (Māori customs).

I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity through Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ), to provide Mau Kōrari workshops to numerous schools nationwide, through their LEOTC (Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom) initiative with the Ministry of Education, which enables students to work in a variety of new and challenging ways. Mau Kōrari has proved to be very successful in this respect, with a series of workshops being presented over the past decade to a wide range of students. These include those who have experienced very little Māori culture previously, as well as those who are already proficient.

Mau Kōrari has been well received by the majority of students and teaching staff and it has proved to be a great method to experience the bi-cultural connections that inform this combination martial art and dance form. I believe that documented experiences from these workshops and others I have held through my own initiative, have demonstrated categorically that there is a place for this type of training in the classroom.

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Tānemahuta Gray is a choreographer, dancer, aerialist, teacher and producer of 18 productions and events and has worked both in New Zealand and abroad since graduating from the New Zealand School of Dance in 1994. His choreographic credits include WOW-World of WearableArt Awards, Māui – One Man Against The Gods, Arohanui – The Greatest Love, Kōwhiti Festivals 2010–2013, The Ragged and the Opening Ceremony of the Chinese World Expo. His performance credits include De La Guarda & The Beautiful Ones.

Jenny Stevenson A former professional dancer, Jenny founded and managed the Wellington Performing Arts Centre, a tertiary Private Training Establishment now operated by Whitireia New Zealand. Since 2010, she has co-produced three consecutive Kōwhiti Contemporary Indigenous Dance Festivals in Wellington with Merenia and Tānemahuta Gray and is currently working as assistant producer for Auckland-based Hawaiki TŪ Haka Theatre Company. Jenny was a dance writer and critic for the *Dominion Post* in Wellington for many years and is continuing to work as a free-lance writer in Auckland.