Chapter Eight

Rere Atu Taku Poi

Like her aunt Tuini Ngawai before her, Ngoi was renowned for her ability to compose songs. Her skill with words and music produced many songs for whatever occasion she attended. Whether she was teaching or at a meeting that was getting heated, Ngoi’s words managed to soothe the souls of those she gifted them to. Ngoi always composed songs for no other reason than to give people something to sing about.

Ngā mahi kapa haka

As discussed in the first chapter, Ngoi spent her young life under the tutelage of Tuini Ngawai in Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū. Ngoi later became the successor to the leadership of Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū, and, although she had been taught by Tuini, she had a different way of teaching. Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū had a clearly distinctive and innovative style to their performance that set them apart from other kapa haka teams. Dr Timoti Kāretu describes this subtle yet effective style:

When you consider that Tuini with all her songs was extremely innovative, with having each line singing its own part, each line having its own actions, all those things, which no other haka teams in the country were doing. Or even action songs where in fact the words anticipated the actions, I mean the action went first, and then you sang. They had a lot of action songs like that done here. ‘Horahora’ is an action song like that; ‘Ka rapa ka’ is an action song like that, which is a style you don’t see anymore. And I thought I might try with the Whare Wānanga and revive that, but they’re too dumb. They can’t sort of anticipate, you know; you’ve got to go before, you know. They’re so used to going with the contemporary haka teams. They are all used to going with the rhythm instead of going before the rhythm. You need those oldies to do it. You need those harder years to do it. But I mean, they were innovative. They were doing things that other haka teams in the country just hadn’t even dreamt about. The old lady Ngā told me once she could only remember the actions...
of her own lines; she didn’t know the actions of the rest of the song, so if you asked her, she’d give the actions of her line and her part, and that was it. I think when it came to Ngoi, she didn’t continue that philosophy of her aunt’s of each line being an individual element with its own actions, its own timing, its own harmony, etc., etc. But when you consider that Tūnī learnt by ear – she wasn’t a musical reader or anything – it has to be extremely difficult. I mean, it’s a brilliant mind to work that out. (Kāretu 1997)

This experience of performer, tutor and composer gave Ngoi a solid foundation in advising people about the art of kapa haka. Through her work across the nation, Ngoi was recognised for her talent and skill in the area of performing arts and was called on to judge competitions regionally, nationally and in Australia from 1969 until 1985. Ngoi’s mokopuna Gina recalled going to Sydney with her grandparents and other whānau members so that Ngoi could judge the competitions there.

Although Ngoi did become a renowned judge in her own right, she did have some reservations about competition. Hana Te Hēmara recalls an incident where Ngoi expressed her anxieties about competition as Tūnī had dissuaded Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū from entering such competitions, believing that performance should be part of life and shared with everyone:

During that time, Aunty Ngoi had a burning desire to the education of her people, and there were many hui we had come down to. I remember because of the Hokowhitu-a-Tū; I loved the singing. The people from here never shout; they sing sweet, soft and with a lot of feeling. She was never one for competitions; to her, it was pleasure, entertainment, spontaneous. When they began to develop the competitions and she was asked to judge, she had some conflicts, and I said, ‘Well, Aunty, if we don’t have competition, we don’t get to keep the standards up. So maybe there is a place for those of us who like to entertain and those of us who like to give the best. Look at the Vienna Boys’ Choir, every year hundreds of young men cue up to get the privilege of being in the Vienna Boys’ Choir, and when their voice breaks, they have to move on.’ I said, ‘When you hear those boys, they are the best in their country, so maybe we should look at it that way.’

‘Oh well,’ she said. That was good. But it’s never been what I like about Tokomaru Bay. It was never competitive. It was always enjoyment. I loved that aspect of how they felt around here. They always won, anyway, even without trying. When you’re not uptight and all hit up about winning, it’s easy to win, I suppose. That’s how it was for Aunty Ngoi. (Te Hēmara 1997)

After some time, with wanting her own people to achieve, Ngoi saw the benefits of entering them into competition. Cara-Lee Pēwhairangi remembers how they would practise for competitions to ensure that a high standard of performance was being maintained amongst the younger members of Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū:
I don’t think she was a competitive person. But because we had those standards and she could see we could go further, she put us in the arena of competition. Just to stress the point, we may have thought we were good, but there were others that may have been better – for us to use that to improve ourselves, to keep up that standard that she expected so that we didn’t just cruise along on what somebody else … laid down because it is so easy to do. Yes, there is a standard to maintain and to keep us on our toes. She put us in a competition so you know there are other people that are better than you. Mind you, it didn’t come out that way as competitors. (Cara-Lee Pēwhairangi 1997)

Encouraging her own younger relatives into the competitions, particularly the Tamararo Tairāwhiti competitions, also promoted a sense of whanaungatanga amongst these children with their kin from the Ngāti Porou area. The unconventional manner in which these competitions were originally held meant they did not have the same restrictions as they do today. The local teams allowed for members to perform for multiple groups, which strengthened the comradeship amongst the performers rather than making them competing team members. Con Te Rata Jones recalls performing as a young teenager for different teams despite being in his mother’s, the late Maka Jones’s, team. He believes that part of it was Ngoi encouraging them to connect on a whanaunga level in a way that only Ngoi could do:

I think that, deep down, she was encouraging, very encouraging, aye. She put you on the spot, and it wasn’t the first time. I just can’t think of an occasion at the moment which she did that. She did that all the time to people, you know. You didn’t have a choice; drop the bomb. Yeah, drop the bomb in public, you know, when you least expect it. For example, we used to compete against one another; we had the high school. My mum used to take high school group, which was one of the reasons why Tamararo was an important thing to the local people. You know, you would come off stage with our team, and Ngoi would be short of men. She’d only have three men, and she’ll say, ‘Here’s your fucking piupiu. Now, get on there, and hop in the back with Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū in the senior section.’ But see, when the national competitions came, they’ve all died in Tiiranga, but you know, you could perform in three teams a night. You could hop on with Waihīrere, jump into Hokowhitu and be in the high school group. Then Mangatū might say, ‘Hey, jump on.’

And you’ll say, ‘What’s your haka? What’s your haka?’

‘Follow, bluff, bluff, just bluff.’ You know, that was her; that was Aunty Ngoi.

Once the national thing come in, they brought in rules, and you weren’t allowed to compete in any other team, and that took the mickey out of the fun here at the Tamararo Competitions. You know, it established a lot of relationships through Ngoi with all the people here. I’ve got my whanaunga here, the Coleman family, the Reihānia family, the Pēwhairangi, the parties from Rongowhakaata, and those are my ties to quite a few families here with my father’s family. Even
PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Private Bag
WELLINGTON
7 November 1977

Dear Mrs Pewhairangi,

It is proposed to submit your name to The Queen for the award of Queen's Service Medal for Community Service (Q.S.M.) on the occasion of the New Year, in recognition of your services to New Zealand. I should be glad if you would inform me as soon as possible whether the proposed distinction would be acceptable to you.

Will you therefore be good enough to send to me at Government House, Wellington, an 'Urgent' Telegram containing only the word "Acceptable" or the words "Not Acceptable", as the case may be. The telegram should be signed with your full Christian names and surname.

I feel sure you will realise that the matter should be treated as strictly confidential until you hear from me again.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Holyoake

Mrs Te Kumeroa Ngoi Pewhairangi,
P.O. Box 14,
TOKOMARU BAY,
Gisborne.

Plate 24. Letter to Ngoi from Prime Minister Keith Holyoake, proposing her QSM award (Pewhairangi Whānau Trust).
Plate 29. Ngoi had a great passion for the development of Māori arts (Pēwhairangi Whānau Trust).


Plate 31. Ngoi at the National Weavers' Association inaugural hui, Labour Weekend 1983. Sir Kingi Ihaka is in the background with the umbrella (Pēwhairangi Whānau Trust).

Plate 33, below. Ngoi addressing the first weavers hui at Pākirikiri marae. Labour weekend, 1983 (Pōwhariangi Whānau Trust).
Plate 34. Ngoi teaching at a Reo and Tikanga Wānanga, Pākirikiri marae (Pewhairangi Whānau Trust).

Plate 35. Ngoi (rear) with students at the Koha hui, Tokomaru Bay (Chas Toogood).
Plate 36. The original composition of ‘E Ipo’ that Ngoi wrote (Pewhairangi Whānau Trust).
with the competition, it didn’t matter to them. I mean Waihīrere was very serious, very serious. Gisborne High School, my mum was seen as serious. But Ngoi didn’t give a shit, you know. If she was short and desperate, she’ll push you on the stage whether you liked it or not. But that was her. That was one quality she had of whakakao tāngata, aye. She is that person. She had that thing about her, and everybody loved her, you know. (Jones 1997)

**Te whakawā**

Ngoi was considered a tohunga at adjudicating kapa haka competitions alongside her contemporaries, including the late John Rangihau and Sir Kīngi Ihaka. Ngoi always had a different approach to judging in comparison to her friends, particularly Te Rangihau who was more a traditionalist, more so than Ngoi.

I think she believed in innovation, which was very different to Rangihau. Rangihau didn’t tolerate innovation at all. Rangihau was a conformist, a very conventional judge. And, therefore, he’s looking for adherents to tenets set down by whatever, by the kaumatua probably, when he was young, so those were his rulings. Whereas Ngoi had parameters, so she would not tolerate anything beyond those parameters, but would also be very allowing of innovation up to a point. (Kāretu 1997)

Ngoi believed that there needed to be some standards required for adjudication, and through her membership on MASPAC, she organised many judges’ meetings to establish quality assurance. Karen Waterreus recalls how they organised a judges and team leaders’ meeting to workshop some of the issues that the teams were facing:

Ngoi was judging for the festival again, and she would think about how the judges needed to be sorted as often there were some things that were happening that were wrong. There were always some things that could be done better and where there needed to be some discussion about how the contemporary things fitted in the festival. So again, Ngoi said, ‘Let’s have a workshop for the judges, the festival judges, all those that are judges and team leaders.’ Now, for those days, that was quite political and amazing. So, here I was; I had to sit down with Ngoi, and we’d start planning. So, for the judges at Ngāruawahia, there were twelve judges from each of the regions. I don’t know how many regions there were. There must have been, what, ten or more regions, and we brought them to Ngāruawahia, and that was when Ngoi did lots more planning about how the workshop should happen and the sort of things that we could do. That was an awesome hui. That was a wonderful gathering. And, you know, her presence there and just the way she challenged and stimulated and did all those things that we, now, in the ’90s are all still learning, Ngoi Pēwhairangi was doing those, way before they became fashionable. (Waterreus 1997)
One of the issues that appeared on the judging scene was the restriction the national committee had placed on women doing the haka. Dr Tīmoti Kāretu discusses this point of contention for Ngoi and her fellow judge the late Erana Coulter:

See in 1982, the stupid national committee at that time had moved that women should not haka with men. So, I composed for the Whare Wānanga an action song sort of opposing that whole idea with all our evidence, and I said to the women, ‘I want you to haka. We’re going to be disqualified, but we’ll haka.’ So, the boys haka’d with the girls, and we came third. Rangihau was one of the judges, you see. But, anyway, when it was all over, Ngoi and Erana Coulter got up and haka’d as if to say, take that national committee! So the point was made that they disagreed with the judges, and ever since then, the rule has been overturned. It was a stupid ruling. But, you know, those sorts of rules come from delegates who come from rohe where that idea has been pushed, and so they present it at the national table. And the national table decides either yes or no based on the evidence that’s been supplied by the rohe. Now, how the rohe got sucked into that one, I don’t really know, especially a rohe like this one where women have always haka’d with men, and it’s been part of Ngāti Porou since time immemorial, I think. But anyway, she and Erana were two of the haka ladies of Ngāti Porou, who did it with the minimum of effort but were very dynamic. (Kāretu 1997)

As a judge, it is clear that Ngoi believed that tikanga should not be compromised in competition, and she was prepared to stand by her convictions when it came to these matters.

*Te whakairo i te kupu*

Ngoi was a tohunga at composing songs, and many of these compositions were written on the spot for particular groups and occasions. Often, these songs were written on scraps of paper, deposit slips or the back of an old cheque book. Like her aunty Tuīnī Ngāwai, Ngoi often composed a song to a Pākehā tune. Her words were simple yet the depth of meaning was vast. For the whole of Aotearoa/New Zealand, Ngoi came to fame for two particular songs she composed. ‘E Ipo’, made famous by the late Prince Tui Teka, and ‘Poi E’, by the late Dalvanius Prime and the Pātea Māori Club, are probably the best known to both Māori and Pākehā alike.

The late Prince Tui (Tumanako) Teka was married to Ngoi’s niece Missy Kururangi. Through his wife, Tui Teka formed a relationship with Ngoi and sought her guidance on numerous issues and, in particular, on composition. Tui Teka originated from Ruatāhuna, and as a native speaker of te reo Māori, he quickly recognised the gift Ngoi had with composition. Tui approached Ngoi about a love song for Missy, and it was not long before
'E Ipo' was composed. It was written on 8 March 1979 on a small piece of paper. By the manner in which she wrote out the lyrics, it is apparent that when Ngoi composed the song she had a particular tune in her head for it (see the composition below, and note Ngoi's editing of the words).

'E Ipo' created history: the first song written in te reo Māori to make number one in the New Zealand Top Ten. Prince Tui Teka acknowledged Ngoi publicly during one of his televised cabaret-style performances. It was at this event that he presented her with the platinum album for 'E Ipo'. Ngoi, accompanied by her sisters, looked uncomfortable with the honour when it was presented to her, but she humbly took the album, and it still takes pride of place at her old homestead amongst her other treasures, now cared for by her family.

The other song that reached number one on the national charts was 'Poi E'. Ngoi composed the words and tune, and the late Māui Dalvanius Prime and the Pātea Māori Club performed the song. Just prior to his death, Dalvanius shared his thoughts about working with Ngoi on compositions. He describes her skill at writing lyrics that fitted with his tunes, rather than the tune fitting the words:

What I loved was writing songs with her. I would just hum a tune, and she would get the phrasing. She would never change anything, and she would just fit the words in with my tune without missing a beat. And it was like, you know, you'd just hum a tune, and she'd write the words right in front of you, and that was it. It was finished. Oh, she was very much a matriarch, you know, and in total control of everything. (Prime 2002)

'Poi E' was composed along with other songs while Dalvanius was staying with Ngoi and Ben. He had anticipated staying for the weekend but ended up staying for a month. She told Dalvanius, who was a student learning te reo Māori, that the best place for him to learn the language was on the marae. As a result, he travelled around with her, learning te reo and being immersed in the culture.

Dalvanius had intended a weekend stop – 'She wanted to write a couple of songs and I said I can only spare one day' – and instead left four weeks later with twelve songs for an opera written with Pewhairangi. Prime would provide ukulele – 'I write all my songs on a ukulele' – and some piano for developing the arrangements: 'She had this rickety old piano which I banged out a few things on. She'd write words as fast as I sang her the melody lines. Working with Ngoi Pewhairangi was such a blessing.' In their first day they wrote Poi-E, Aku Raukura and Hei Konei Ra, Dalvanius reworking old Fascinations grooves and Pewhairangi providing lyrics. (www.folksong.org.nz/poi_e/index.html)

Like 'E Ipo', 'Poi E' created a phenomenon in the country. It was a juxtaposition between traditional Māori performing arts and contemporary music that
Ngoinoi Pewhairangi

utilised the Pātea Māori Club combined with new age synthesised music that incorporated an instrumental piece designed for break-dancing.

Dalvanius decided Poi-E was about marketing the Māori language: ‘I told Ngoi of my personal life experience of growing up in Patea in an environment void of any indigenous heroes or icons, Māori or Kiwi … We designed Poi-E using that marketing strategy. Apart from a calculated urban consumer-orientated publicity campaign, Poi-E’s strength was its rural roots, the promotion of Te Reo Māori, the Māori Language and Kiwi culture. Long after her and I have left our earthly bodies, the language – via our anthem – will live on from generation to generation. (www.folksong.org.nz/poi_e/index.html)

The early 1980s saw an increased awareness of Māori songs through the work of Ngoi and support of people like Dalvanius and Tui Teka. These songs set the benchmark, and it is unfortunate that no other Māori-language song has matched them. Dalvanius shared his thoughts on the music industry and the production of Māori language songs:

Ngoi’s success really was through the Pātea Māori Club and through Tui, just those songs. It was more focused, and, well, it’s history – it’s part of the history of this country, and most of all, it established the lady as, along with Tuini, one of the most prolific composers of this millennium, you know, in this millennium that’s coming up. And because of all those charts, there’s never been any other Māori song, not even Aria’s song, that has charted and reached gold to platinum status. Aria’s has reached gold, but still they couldn’t get to number one. See, and for me, that’s important, and yet, they had thousands of dollars behind them, you know, and I mean it from TV3 to Pūkana to Te Māngai Pāho to Te Taura Whiri, the Māori Language Board, and I know how much was poured into that group just to get it where they are. And now one of my friends say that they’ve broken up, which would be predictable because that’s the music climate in this country. You know, if they think they’re going to make a living out of te reo, they are really very badly mistaken and disillusioned – they won’t. (Prime 2002)

Ngoi’s compositions were successful because they were based in a time period when consciousness was being raised, and they were written for the love of the language.

The following are the lyrics to the songs she composed with Dalvanius:

Poi E

E rere rā e taku poi porotiti
Titahataha rā
whakararuraruru e
Porotakataka rā
Poro hurihuri mai
Rite tonu ki te tiwaiwaka e
Ka parepare rā
Pioioi rā
Whakahekeheke e
Kia korikori e
Piki whakarungā rā
Mā muiinga mai rā
Taku poi porotiti, taku poi e

Poi e, whakataka mai
Poi e, kaua he rerekē
Poi e, kia piri mai ki a au
Poi e, ka awhi mai rā
Poi e, tāpekatia mai
Poi e, o tāua aroha
Poi e, Paiheretia rā
Poi, taku poi e

_Aku Raukura_

Hurihuri noa
Ka wawata noa
Hurihuri noa
Ka wawata noa
Kei te wawata ahau e
Mō aku ōhākī kia hoki mai
Te puna waiora o aku raukura taukuri e
Kua tae rā ki te wā e rapu ai ahau te oranga
Homai rā ki te kapu o aku ringa
Ngā taonga aroha te mana e
Te aroha, te pono, te aroha (tūmanakotia rā)
Tūmanakotia rā hai ūpāre mō tātou katoa
Ki te ao Pākehā e kore rawa e ngaro e hoa mā e
Ki te ao Pākehā e kore rawa e ngaro e hoa mā e

_Hei Konei Rā_

Hei konei rā
Ka hoki au
Ki te kāinga e
Tērā te wā
Ka kite anō
Tātou i a tātou katoa
Nā te aroha
I piri ai
Te rongomau
Ki tēnei whenua
Ka tipu te pono
Ka tipu te pono
Me te tika

As a producer of music with his own record label, Dalvanius also encouraged the local talented people of Tokomaru Bay to consider singing for him. Cara-Lee Pēwhairangi made the waiata ‘Haere Mai’, by the late Sir Āpirana Ngata, famous with her rendition produced by Dalvanius. She remembers how Dalvanius was very particular about his work and reminded her of the standard that her aunty would have expected:

When I recorded ‘Haere Mai’ in the Marmalade Studios in Wellington with Dalvanius, I went in there because I knew ‘Haere Mai’; I knew the words. Well, I thought I knew it all. I went in there, and I forgot the words, and Dalvanius comes in, and he tells me off, and he mentions her name. He said, ‘She wouldn’t be happy with the way you’re singing that, you know.’ I was just reading it word for word off the piece of paper. So with that, they turned the lights down in the studio, and I just thought of her the whole time. That only took one recording, and it was done. Whereas, with me reading the words, we had done about six or seven re-recordings. But once he yelled at me and told me to think of Aunty Ngoi, all those thoughts came back of how she used to talk to me before I sang. It just went in one take, and it is what you hear today is that. (Cara-Lee Pēwhairangi 1997)

Although ‘Poi E’ and ‘E Ipo’ became the most noted songs in the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand, there were so many other songs that Ngoi composed that have touched the lives of different people. The following are a selection of these compositions with some explanations about them. The whānau have provided their blessing for the following compositions to be included in this work.

‘Tiaho Mai’ was composed by Ngoi in the 1950s. She reminds us of the importance of peace, tranquility and the power of God, to whom we should give thanks for the many gifts he has given to mankind, and she writes that through our strong faith in God, we are able to conquer all obstacles.

_Tiaho Mai_

Tiaho mai te marama
Hei māramatanga rā e
Mō ngā tamariki Māori e tau nei
Hāpaiinga te whakapono rā e
Taupokitiia te kino
Kia tau ai te rangimārie

Nō reira e Te Matua Rawa
Toro iho mai ō ringa
Kauparetia atu te kino.
Ahakoa ngā taupatu
O ngā tini takawaenga
Kaua rawa tātou katoa e tautoko
Kōkiriria ngā tūmanako
Kia kore e tutuki
Ngā mahi hē mō te iwi Māori e

Nō reira e Te Matua Rawa
Toro iho mai ō ringa
Kauparetia atu te kino
Kauparetia atu te kino

'Ko Au' was composed by Ngoi for the Tamararo Māori Kapa Haka Competition held in Gisborne in 1972. It acknowledges Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū for competing every year since the competition started and the close links the kapa developed with the other competing groups throughout the Ngāti Porou rohe. The relationships that both Tuini and Ngoi developed with these teams and individuals have been sustained by the whānau as they both desired.

Ko Au

Ko au he manu
Ka tū ka rere mai

He tau, he tau nā
Ka hoki mai anō

Ki te āwhina aue
Ngā taonga aroha
Hei maunga ringa
Mō tēnei reanga

Ngoi composed this waiata-ā-ringa, 'Kia Kaha Ngā Iwi', in 1967 for Te Hokowhitu-a-Tū to perform at the Tamararo Māori Kapa Haka Competition in Gisborne. The kapa won the waiata-ā-ringa section with this composition.

Kia Kaha Ngā Iwi

Kia kaha ngā iwi pupuritia
Ngā purapura i mahue mai rā
Kua ngaro rātou mā ngā rangatira
Hei mātorotoro mai i a tātou
Kāore he tirohanga kē e te iwi
Ko ngā marae hei awhi mai
Taku Māoritanga mana motuhake
The following composition is a pātere that highlights the historical boundaries of Te Whānau-a-Ruataupare and the significant areas of Tokomaru Bay. This pātere is similar to other tauparapara that move around geographical features in acknowledgement of Māori ancestral links with the landscape that helps define Māori identity.

Ka Piki Au

Ka piki au piki ake
Piki ake au ki te taumata rā o Marotiri
Ka titiro iho au ki ngā huarahi
I haere ai aku mātua tīpuna
Ki te kimi orang i ngā takutai a Ruataupare e

Hoatu ai koe
Hoatu ai koe ki te tapa o te tai
E kīa nei e
Ko Tāpātai e

Rokohanga atu rā
Rokohanga atu rā te pupūtanga mai o ngā waiora
Tapahina tonuhia ko te Waipūpū
Whiti atu koe e hika ki te Waihoa e

Te waihotanga mai
Te waihotanga mai a rātou mā
I ngā tohu tauranga
Ko Pōhaitapu ki te Toka-ā-namu
Te whare puni o Tangikūkū e
Ko Waimarino
Ko Waimarino te ūnga mai rā o ngā waka hoe hoe
Hei āhurutanga i ngā hau o te Tonga e
Ka eke Tangaroa eke Panuku
Ka eke Tangaroa i marae eke
Kai atū ō mata ki te Māwhai e
Te marae tāngata o ngā rā o mua
E hura ō kanohi ki Tangoiro
Ka ripo te moana ki Marahea
E mau ō ngutu ki te pewa pāua
Ko te mana tēnā
O Tokoroa hei Tokoroa hei
Ka minamina au ki te kai mātai e
Ka heke iho au ki Tāhunaroa
Takahanga waewae nōhau e

Ki ngā runukutanga
Ki ngā runukutanga a te Aokaurangi
I whāngaia mai ki te kāwai tāngata

Te tohu ki uta
Te tohu ki uta ko te pito o Piuta
Puta atu tō ihu
Ki te wai whakaata e

Ko Te Ariuru
Ko Te Ariuru Te Waitakeao
Ko Tawarirangi te wahine tipua
Ko wai ka tohu
Ko wai ka hua
E hiki ō wae ki Ōtairi e

Ki ngā rua kōura
Ki ngā rua kōura a te Parengaio
Te tohutanga a te Whaitakuta e

Matehia inu koe ko Koutunui
Kei raro tonu iho i Tawhiti a Paoa
Whatinga atu koe
Ka hāhātia mai e

E noho tāua
E noho tāua te karaka tēnei
Terenga mai o te Rāwhiti e
To Reo Karanga E’ was composed for the opening of the dining room at Mataura in the South Island. Te Whanau-a-Ruataupare were invited and agreed to attend in the mid-1980s. Ngoi then composed this waiata while having lunch in the kitchen during a hui at Pākirikiri marae. This is one of the last compositions she wrote before her untimely death in 1985. Te Whanau-a-Ruataupare was invited for many reasons. Many of Te Whanau-a-Ruataupare had left Tokomaru Bay and the East Coast to find employment, either to work in the freezing works industry or the shearing gangs. The closing of the freezing works in Tokomaru Bay from 1954 to 1955 left many people unemployed. So, many families decided to migrate south to seek employment in the industry with which they were familiar, and they settled in towns such as Mataura, Bluff and Invercargill.

To Reo Karanga E

E tū tautoko noa
Ngā tumanako e
A te ngākau māhaki
Te hautū ake nei

Kua honohia nei e
Tātou i tenei rā
I runga i te aroha
Te rangimārie

Kua ngaro ngā mōrehu
Tū mokemoke noa
Ngā waihotanga rā e
A rātou katoa

Karanga mai mihi mai,
Ki a mātou katoa e
Te whānau kua eke nei
Tō reo karanga e, tō reo karanga e
This next composition was recalled by one of Ngoi’s students at Tokomaru Bay, Tania Mitcalfe. She remembered Ngoi putting this song up during their language wānanga and expecting them to translate and learn it. Later, Tania asked Ngoi who had written it, and she replied that it was her.

*Ka Titiro Anō*

Ka titiro anō ahau e  
Ka pā mai ko te aroha  
E kore rawa koe e warewaretia  
Ki roto i te mana o ahau e  
Maringi noa ngā roimata i aku kamo e  
Auē ka hoki ngā mahara e  
Ki ō mahinga atawhai  
E kore rawa koe e warewaretia  
Ki roto i te mana o ahau e

The following song demonstrates Ngoi’s belief in people and her conviction that kindness should be shown to all. It proffers a Māori understanding that through their achievements and work, people will be recognised by the world and by the Māori people.

*Kaua Rā e Huri Noa*

Kaua rā e huri noa  
Kaua hei whakahāwea  
Mā ō mahi ka kitea koe  
E te ao, e tō iwi Māori  
Kua puāwai rawa ngā purapura e  
I ruia mai i ngā wā o tua whakarere  
E toro nei ngā kāwai taura tangata  
Hei hono i te aroha o ō tāua tīpuna  
Te mana, te wehi – Aue!  
Awhitia ngā taonga  
Kei memeha kei ngaro  
Kei tūkinotia e te ao  
Puritia tō mana  
Kei riro e  
Kia mau, kia mau, auē

As previously discussed, Ngoi spent a lot of time on the road promoting language and education to numerous communities up and down the country. ‘Mahara’ was composed on one of these trips with Katerina Mataira and
expresses the love felt by these women for their husbands who were their cornerstones, their rocks and their pou tokomanawa who stayed at home to ensure that things were taken care of.

Mahara

Mahara e kai kinikini nei
Tangi hotuhotu ana rā
Mōhou e te tau

Tiro noa ahau mokemoke ana rā
Pā mai ana ko te pōuri nui
I tō haerenga

He aha rā he oranga
Kua ngaro rawa atu koe
Kei whea rā he tānga manawa
E te tau e, tau e

Nāhau rā i tuku mai te aroha
Whakaora i te manawa
Me te ngākau maru

Nō reira tahuri mai
Tahuri mai rā e te tau
Ki ahau e, ki ahau e
Mahara

‘Whakarongo’ was originally composed at Pākirikiri when Ngoi was hosting the Koha television programme team for their wānanga. Waihoroi Shortland and Selwyn Muru approached Ngoi for a song, and Ngoi sat down and composed this one. She gathered her whānau together to assist her with creating the actions and teaching the people from Koha as the majority were Pākehā people who had never learnt a Māori song before. Later, Ngoi took this same composition with her to Ngāruawāhia to the last Te Ataarangi hui she attended and adapted some of the words for them. The verse that begins with ‘Whiua ki te ao …’ was the verse she gave the Koha team to encourage them to spread Māori programmes in broadcasting to the nation and to the world. For Te Ataarangi, she replaced that verse with one that begins ‘Tēnā kia purea te …’. The popularity of this song spread throughout the nation, and in different Māori communities today, many people sing both distinctive verses she composed for the two groups.

In 1995, the Māori Language Commission, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, made ‘Whakarongo’ the official song for the Year of the Māori Language. This further increased the profile of the song in the nation.
Whakarongo

Whakarongo!
Ki te reo Māori e karanga nei
Whakarongo!
Ki ngā akoranga rangatira
Nā te Atua i tuku iho ki a tātou e
Pupuritia, kōrerotia mō ake tonu

Tirohia!
Ngā tikanga tapu a ngā tīpuna
Kapohia
Hei oranga ngākau – auē

Whiua ki te ao
Whiua ki te rangi
Whiua ki ngā iwi katoa
Kaua rawatia e tukua e
Kia memeha e

Whakarongo!
Ki te reo Māori e karanga nei
Whakarongo!
Ki ngā akoranga rangatira
Tēnā kia purea te hau ora e
He kupu tuku iho mō tēnei reanga
He kupu tuku iho mō tēnei reanga

Whakarongo!
Tō reo whakarongo!

Ngōi’s passion for te reo was not only expressed through her work with Te Ataarangi. Ngoi also worked tirelessly to support the Kōhanga Reo movement. The following song was composed to demonstrate her support for this kaupapa and, in particular, Iritana Tawhiwhirangi. It was put to the tune of ‘Ave Maria’.

Kua Eke Rā Ngā Tūmanako

Kua eke rā ngā tūmanako
Kua puāwai te reo Māori
I roto i ngā Kōhanga Reo
O Te Tai Rāwhiti
Nāhau rā e Iri te kōrero
Mō ngā tamariki tātou katoa
Hei whakahuihui mai
The following song was composed at Ngoi and Ben’s home when, after a long day working in her garden, Ngoi took shelter under a tree and watched her son, Terewai, and her mokopuna Gina come home. She looked at her family and contemplated what the future would hold for them and how the world was changing dramatically around her. This song has also become popular in Māori communities because of the significant message it sends to Māori.

**Ka Noho Au I Konei**

Auē! Ngā iwi e
Ka noho au i konei ka whakaaro noa
Me pēhea rā te huri a te ao katoa?
Ngā rongo kino e tukituki nei i te takiwā
Ngā whakawā i hau nei i ngā tamariki
Kua kore noa he ture hei arataki
Te mana, te ihi ka takahia mai
Kia kaha tātou ki te whakahoki mai
Te mauri ora me te wairua
Auē! Ngā iwi e!

Tāpaea ngā hē katoa ki runga rawa
Kei a ia te ora me te mārama
Kapohia te aroha nui o te ariki
Māna e kaupare rā ngā kino katoa
Whītiki, maranga mai, horahia rā
Ngā kupu hei oranga ā-tinana e
Kia noho ai i raro i te maru e
Te rangimārie me te rongo pai
Auē! Me te aroha
Te rangimārie me te rongo pai
Auē! Ngā iwi e!
Puritia tō mana Māori motuhake
Auē! Auē! Auē! Hā!

There are so many more songs that people will remember that have not been included in this book. This sample, whilst small, illustrates Ngoi’s talent for composing songs for all who came into her life. The meanings behind the words are not obscure; they are clear, and the messages are timeless. No other
Māori composer, to date, has composed to the same calibre of Ngoi, even though more than twenty years have gone by since her passing.

Ngoi was an active participant in Māori performing arts, and she supported them with the same energy as her work on language and weaving. Her expertise and wisdom was sought from far and wide, and she contributed to history by producing two songs composed in te reo Māori that are known throughout this country. Ngoi had high standards, and she passed these on to people she met and influenced. These standards are still held by those people who respected her knowledge in this area. With her death, Ngoi left a huge void in the area of the performing arts and, in particular, the composition of songs. She focused on the kupu and always saw this as the essential element to performance. She gave the nation some of the most beautiful words ever written in te reo Māori.