This document provides a transcript of the audio description for the video of the performance of Te Ahu Taiohi, devised as part of the Tungia Tahia Festival for Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts 2022.

### Context

Te Ahu Taiohi is a 7-week program that utilises Kapa Haka, Māori and Pacific performance expression, Hip Hop, Contemporary Dance, Poetry, Theatre, Mātauranga Māori and therapeutic conversation, to build confidence and emotional resilience in our taiohi, increasing their self-discipline, supporting them to grow connections within their community, and their belief in themselves.

Delivered by experienced Tuākana (choreographers/facilitators) and directed by expert practitioners of Kapa Haka, Waiata, Māori  Theatre, urban and contemporary movement, and taha hinengaro (mental health) the program has culminated in a large-scale performance event, celebrating the achievement of the participants, and which we look forward to now sharing with you.

The Taiohi, or young people, in the program and the performance came together from Porirua, Hutt City, Ōtaki and Hāwera.

There are about three times as many females as males. They range in age from 13 - 18

A number of the characters in the performance are heard as a voice over.

Often the characters and dancers will look directly at the camera, interacting with us.

### Costume

The costumes all blend tonally, in earthy shades of brown and green. They are layered. Everyone wears different kinds of trousers with a t shirt or sweatshirt, and the girls , and some of the boys, wear a short cloak or korowai in individual ways over the top. Some have the cloak over one shoulder, others more of a poncho style. This same cloak or korowai is then reversed to be a fresh green lavalava later in the performance.

Toward the end of the performance, a mid length cloak of pale grey and blue is worn by everyone, including during the group sasa.

Most of the females have long hair, worn loose, and initially they have a red feather, worn however they wish. The group seems synchronous in these earthy colours and similar costuming.

After the first monologue they take off their cloaks and wear t shirts and trousers or shorts for the hip hop sequence.

The two boys walking home from school wear t shirt and trousers, the one whose story we follow has a dark orange t shirt with cut off sleeves and his hair braided close to his head in rows at the top. He has a "porotiti", made from a carved piece of wood: flat, about the size and shape of a thumb, threaded on a long loop of string, which used to be used as a healing tool and sometimes to accompany karakia. In modern days it is also used as a children's toy.

In the sequence where lavalava are used, they are worn over the top of the basic costume - the korowai are lined with lime green material to make this change easily. Similarly, the ei katu: wreaths worn on the head, are lime green, made of artificial flowers - they seem to glow under fluorescent light

### Set

The performance takes place on the wide stage of The Te Rauparaha Arena, in Porirua. There is a large screen at the back. The changing projections on the screen add context, environment and atmosphere to the live performance. The central large screen is flanked by two smaller screens either side, the shape of doorways, which decrease in height towards the edge of the stage. Often in the video, only part of the screen is visible as the shot sizes change. Sometimes we don’t see the screen at all, and just see the actor-dancers.

During the opening song and dance, the screen shows aerial views of Porirua.

When we see Takapūwāhia marae, the screen shows the red, white and black intricately carved and painted gateway which frames the front face of the wharenui, beyond.

### Lighting

The use of up lighting at the back and strong individual beams of side light is a feature of this performance. In the beginning, white lights shine upwards behind the screen like searchlights. Later, these change to red in a broader beam. Warm golden light emphasises the earthy colours of the costumes in the opening numbers, while the light is colder when the old school movie about the development of Porirua plays.

In the haunting waiata after this, smoke is used which contributes to the atmosphere created by the side lighting, because it adds texture to the beams of light.

### Introduction

The opening title graphic is white on a black background. It reads ‘Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts’.

On the next slide ‘Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts 2022, Taki Rua Productions, Te Rākau Hua o te Wao Tapu Trust present as part of the Tungia Tahia Festival. Te Ahu Taiohi.’ ‘Te Ahu Taiohi’ is in red lettering. The name ‘Tungia Tahia Festival’ is seen again in large red letters. It is repeated on the centre screen at the start of the performance. The music and voices you hear initially are pre recorded.

#### 0.15

The taiohi walk towards each other from the left and right of the stage. They are backlit by the projections which are like four door ways, showing four young people in mid shot, laughing and dancing. The backdrop changes to hills, covered with sparse scrub, a transmitter tower on the top. Lights shine upwards behind the screen like searchlights, the floor is lit with blue.

(Pause)

The group forms four lines, one behind another and stands very still, in warm light. The girls at the front, feet together, boys interspersed behind them, taking a wider stance. They all stand poised, eyes lowered, just the girls’ hands flickering in a wiri.

#### 1.15

Images of the group in different shots fade across each other creating a layered effect, evoking time, the past and perhaps those gone before, communicating the presence of their tūpuna

#### 1.34

As one, they all raise their heads and the group surges forward. The stage is lit with warm gold. The whole group sings, radiating welcome.

#### 2.00

Two girls swing poi, crossing each other in front of the group

#### 2.20

Two boys step forward to dance, surrounded by the group in support. They are relaxed and joyful in their movement, changing their weight from one foot to another as they siva Samoa - extending arms at shoulder height, opening and closing their hands.

#### 3.10

The boys take a small bow and join the group, now seated cross legged in a semi circle. Two girls take the focus for kapa rima. They use more expansive, delicate hand gestures and swing their hips in the kapa rima, the dance of the Cook Islands

#### 3.55

A solo dancer takes the focus as the group keeps the rhythm with their clapping. She performs a lakalaka. A Tongan dance. She makes circular sweeping motions, and gestures to her heart and then to the audience, she kneels as she continues to dance.

#### 4.30

Now the whole group stands and comes forward.

#### 4.56

They walk backwards in formation, bring their hands in front of their chests, then down by their sides emphatically, their hands wiri.

#### 5.05

Some of the girls pūkana.

The projections change to black and white and the group look confused- they seem to be saying ‘where is this coming from? Are you hearing this too?’

#### 5.40

They all turn and face the screen.

#### 6.19

They look sad

#### 6.32

They gather, sombre, in a group, some sitting

#### 6.43

They do a Royal wave

#### 7.05

They bow their heads. Lights drop to a misty, twilight state, strong sidelight on a solo performer, others gather round, mostly sitting.

#### 8.04

The taiohi swirl to standing in formation around the soloist.

They advance, arms low, outstretched.

#### 8.44

Girls wield the korari - flashing through scarlet light

#### 10.33

Total unison and solidarity from the taiohi in the haka. Takapūwāhia behind the group. Fade into an early colour movie

#### 11.11

The group settles around the stage. A girl steps forward

#### 12.29

The screen now shows an orange, pink, blue faded background, with a big wire mesh pattern across, warm light.

A group of girls jump up to deliver a hip hop dance in unison, they flick their shoulders cheekily, then swoop into slow motion.

They come into a static, layered formation, keeping the beat with punching, flicking gestures.

There is abundant energy, confidence and joy in their movements, as a group of girls take the floor, they line up and shift quickly from side to side, switching between slow motion and punches,

They all gather in two loose groups at the back, as beams of light rotate across the stage through smoky haze.

A boy and a girl face off. He smiles as she smashes out a series of dynamic moves, dancing very close, right in his space, but never touching him. She’s whirling her fists around her head.

She looks for support from her crew, as she walks back to rejoin them on the right of the stage.

He follows her, and makes his own moves, which include a digging movement, before he turns away to move towards his own team on the left.

He is followed by another girl who gives him a little push on his shoulder. He faces her, she ducks down to the floor, then using his body for support, she springs up to do a straddle jump, then peels off into a cartwheel.

Two girls stomp forward in unison from the left, and dance together, keeping one foot planted and switching from side to side. The amazing dance battle builds, the teams are laughing and cheering each other on.

Five dancers from the right answer the challenge with a marching, punching dance.

A boy in an orange T shirt steps through them and executes a series of steps crossing his feet over alternately as his arms cross in front of his body. He is smiling and enjoying his moment.

A taller boy steps up from the left, he makes gesture in the air as though he is landing a ball through a hoop, then plants his fist on the ground, before coming up with arms wide in a ‘nailed it’ expression. The team on the left gather around him, several of the girls sit, then roll back onto their shoulders before jumping up again.

This phase of the battle is over, there are hand slaps and appreciation from each side.

#### 15.07

Everyone now joins together to dance, led by the girl who started the dance battle, her face says she is confident and staunch, this is her thing.

They keep the beat with their whole bodies as they execute intricate foot work, moving in different directions.

Another girl takes the lead now as the group comes into a triangular formation behind her.

#### 16.00

The group forms a loose semi circle, and a girl steps up to solo, she holds up two fingers, brings them towards her eyes, then points at another girl on the opposite side - ‘ I challenge you!’. She takes a wide, bent leg stance and windmills her arms, punching out wildly, she continues this as she walks towards a girl in the other team. As she turns to walk away the girl she challenged gives her a push from behind on her shoulders. And answers her challenge with her own emphatic dance, dipping down to the floor and up again.

Two girls dance in from the left, with a bouncing step they work diagonals in front of their bodies, their challenge is answered by two girls from the right who dance them away, back to their team. One of them brings a hand up to her forehead and makes an ‘L for loser’ sign.

Left team is not giving up and a large group of girls cross the space, dancing their response, making a winding up motion in front of their chests with their fists. They are answered again from the right, and ushered back across the common space.

They seem to settle the score, there are claps, handshakes and exultant gestures.

Once more they line up, evenly spaced to strut their fantastic moves all together. Lights rotate from the sides casting rays of moving light through the space and across the floor. One girl looks directly to camera and gives a smiling salute, shaking her finger at us, as though saying ‘ don’t even think about challenging us!’

They all keep a pumping dynamic going with their whole bodies, forming a loose group.

#### 17.50

Suddenly The dancers move in slow motion, as though moving underwater, then breakout again, striding away, out of sight through shafts of light.

#### 18.02

Two boys wave goodbye to their mates, the light is low, like sunset.

#### 20.15

They exchange a super complicated secret handshake

The stage darkens, father in voice over

#### 20.55

He puts his hands up to protect his face as darkness descends

Intense, Cold blue light across the floor, The boy who was just getting yelled at by his father gets up off the floor, as if we have returned to him after being knocked down. He turns to walk slowly towards us out of the gloom. He takes a porotiti out of his pocket and starts to spin it, first by making circles towards us, then by pulling the string, moving his hands in opposite directions. We see a close up of the object, its soft curves. The taiohi gather around him. Boys first, with fists clenched by their sides, then the whole group. They wear their cloaks again. They stare out at the audience with a steady gaze.

The group moves away, giving him space and reforms at a distance

We see a close up of the boy with the spinning toy as he looks along the length of the string.

A girl peels out from the front of the group at the left, and dances, turning on the spot and then dropping to the floor then rising up, once, twice and peeling away.

Another girl comes from the right of the group, she takes a wide stance and krumps.

Two girls dance In sequence, the first floating, the second tumbles gracefully and gymnastically across the floor

Many dancers take turns to dance their support and empathy

While the toy still spins

#### 23.23

The group starts to move, separating, searching, circulating looking lost and worried. Some hold their heads, others their stomachs

Sharp white light flashes, there’s a lot of dynamic movement as the group weaves together, while the boy stands in total stillness, just the toy spinning

#### 24.26

They freeze, in a mid shot the boy continues to stare out front, working the toy.

#### 24.40

All Costumes change to the green Pasifika. A girl in a brick red t shirt, lime green lava lava and ei katu offers a hand to another girl and pulls her up to her feet, smiling gently. She turns to face the camera in a mid shot.

#### 25.10

‘Fatal truth’ she dances in low light, two others sing

#### 25.58

She turns to face us

#### 27.07

A trio of dancers make slow sweeping movements, the girl looks to us again

#### 27.38

Lights change to purple as a single dancer moves her hips from left to right, her back to us, she opens her arms then reaches up and makes a wide circle.

the girls beat the rhythm with a single poi on the floor, then come up to kneeling, and circle the poi wide overhead, repeatedly punctuating the movement with a vigorous shake of the poi, tightly gripped in one hand.

they stretch their arms out in front of them, dancers rise slowly, then make a diagonal arm movement, before turning their backs to us, the poi behind them at waist height.

Ei katu and lava lava glow under what could almost be fluorescent light

Poi in hand, they make slow sensual movements in sync, before gathering into a tight group and stepping forward in unison, their hips swing side to side

Two boys leap in front of the group, crossing each other in mid air. The group separates and the lead dancer comes towards us, her arms wide, she reaches up over her head then brings her arms down in a circle, poi in one hand.

In a running crouch five boys follow each other, then gather on one knee in a semi circle around the dancer, raising one hand up.

The lead dancer turns her back and swings her hips at a faster pace as the other dancers make strong drumming movements with their hands

#### 29.05

( straight on )

A tall boy strides forward with a microphone.

He nods an acknowledgment to the audience, silhouetted in purple light, he walks backwards into the group, as the dancers, with their backs to us make slow arm movements, up and down, poi in hand. in the background the beautifully lit water of Porirua harbour at sunset

#### 29.38

A boy and girl dance, they hold a long poi between them, connecting them at a distance

The others sing and wield poi in support

#### 31.50

The lead dancer steps forward through the group, poi flying. The other dancers also }circle their poi.

#### 32.30

After spinning her long poi with impressive control she takes off her ei katu and bows to the audience. She dances with a friend and they dance their way off, smiling.

#### 32.45

The mood changes abruptly as the back screen erupts with forest fire, huge clouds, sunset colours and a tornado

It’s apocalyptic

The eye of the camera roams, looking for people- a figure emerges holding a stick.

A boy steps out, walking with careful, flicking steps, the backdrop changes, to cold misty snowdrift through trees

Lights flicker

#### 33.19

Figures move tentatively. People help others seek safety and huddle in groups.

Light is low and cold, they shiver. The background changes- sparse, bare trees with snow, lightning across a giant cloudscape. A girl limps on, supported on either side by friends. Behind them lava spews from a volcano mouth. Figures move slowly, carrying red sticks. They are silhouetted against the screen, alternately grey with cloud or dark with volcanic activity. Feet shuffle and step uncertainly, gathering in small groups. Shafts of light cut across the darkness, illuminating people here and there as they sit huddled together

#### 34.45

In a voice over we hear the announcement

#### 36.35

They respond with a weak salute, then get to their feet wearily. Two boys confer

#### 37.35

He wobbles his knees a bit

#### 37.53

He straightens up, energised, an launches into a hip hop dance, before deflating again

#### 39.22

‘ no, you’ll never have me’. They wrestle him off

#### 40.54

The boys run off, behind them an evenly spaced group is revealed, in low turquoise light, wearing their korowai and each holding a red stick or korari vertically in front of them, their hands in fists. Their focus is intense.

They begin the haka.

They separate their fists, still holding the stick, and bring them together again repeatedly, in a vertical movement and then a horizontal move. They keep the rhythm with right foot

They step forward together on the beat, always keeping the korari vertical.

The light intensifies, they bring korari to their right shoulder and look over it, before snapping into two groups, turning away at right angles from the centre. They make space for a group of five girls, who hold their hands up at chest height, slowly, and then with increasing speed and skill they slap, clap and stamp a complex, simultaneous haka. The whole group joins in. Moves are cued by the shouts of one of the boys at the back, and the group respond as one to the cues.

The group bring their hands behind their backs, and step out as they lean forwards, bird-like. Spotlights rotate across the space

They come up to standing with a wide stance

This evolves into a more free form sasa, where they keep the rhythm with their clapping but move freely in between.

#### 43.17

The group sit in a circle and one girl steps into the space, leading a change in rhythm

#### 44.15

She sits with the others. Their torsos sway forward over their cross legs several times, they sweep their hands across the floor and clasp them together over their heads, looking up. Their knees keep the rhythm up and down as their arms make geometric shapes on the beat, the whole group in perfect unison.

They snap into stillness, their hands in fists on their knees. Behind them the backdrop sweeps across the Porirua hills.

A girl stands and speaks directly to camera, then others take her place in sequence (45.17)

#### 48.43

Golden light bathes the group as they clap and cheer,

The last girl to speak stands, poi in one hand at chest level, others sit, holding poi in the same way

#### 49.30

A group of girls takes up the beat in a vigorous hip hop dance, lime green lava lava flash. they are joined by others as the dance shifts to an ura, hips shake vigorously, and arms move and fingers snap as one. In lines they twist and turn as they clear the centre space.

A group of ten stands in a line, poi in hand

#### 50.09

Lights shift to magenta as the whole group sasa. Three soloists then take centre stage while two dancers perform solo's around them, pirouette's moving into floor work. In the final haka Takapūwāhia marae stands behind the taiohi.