



Image: John McDermott

# Hōkioi me te Vwōhali

## From spirit eagles land

### 2020 TEACHERS RESOURCE

New Zealand  
Festival **OF THE ARTS**

#### Curriculum Links

Dance, Music, Te Reo, History,  
Culture

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guide to make the most of the  
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# CAST AND CREATIVES

Ōkāreka Dance Company [okareka.com](http://okareka.com) (Aotearoa/New Zealand) in collaboration with Exhale Dance Tribe [exhaledancetribe.com](http://exhaledancetribe.com) (United States)

## Creative team

Conception and Choreography **Taiaroa Royal**  
Choreography **Missy Hubbard**  
Choreographer/Dancer **Andrew Hubbard**  
Cultural Advisor **Tui Ranapiri-Ransfield**  
Producer **Tanya Muagututi'a**  
Sound Design **Maree Sheehan**  
Lighting Design/Production Manager  
**Vanda Karolczak**  
Costume Design **Linda Lepou Teina**  
Composer **Keri Pewhairangi Teina**  
Choreographer **Bianca Hyslop**

## Dancers

**Ashley Klein** (Exhale)  
**Jackie Engelkamp** (Exhale)  
**Ali Rose Morgan** (Exhale)  
**Sarah Rolfsen** (Exhale)  
**Maddy Cundiff** (Exhale)  
**Bianca Hyslop** (Ōkāreka)  
**Jesse Wikiriwhi** (Ōkāreka)  
**Kent Date** (Ōkāreka)  
**Cuba Haslam** (Ōkāreka)  
**Leighton Rangī** (Ōkāreka)  
**Cory-Toalei Roycroft** (Ōkāreka)  
**Erin Meek** (Ōkāreka)

## ABOUT THE SHOW

Enter a world of sacred eagles that blends the ancient with the modern.

*From spirit eagles land* explores parallels between the Hōkioi (Haast) Eagle and the Vwōhali (American Golden) Eagle, embodying the majesty and mana of those two sacred birds and their shared whakapapa. Swooping and soaring, the dancers' movement is enhanced by a cinematic surround-sound experience that cleverly transports you between Aotearoa, Duyuktv (Cherokee) land and the spiritual realm.

For Ōkāreka choreographer Taiaroa Royal (Te Arawa, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Raukawa, Ūenukukōpako), this world premier season is the climax of his 11-year journey of cultural discovery that began with a chance meeting with Cincinnati-based choreographers Missy and Andrew Hubbard of Exhale Dance Tribe and the revelation that both Māori and the Duyuktv people share a special connection through reverence of the eagle.

Native American's have many animal spirits and the eagle, or Vwōhali, the Native American name, is considered to be the Messenger of the Gods. Extinct, the Hōkioi (or Haast Eagle) was a creature Māori were superstitious about and was never seen, living in the heavens or high peaks. Some Māori saw the cry of the Hōkioi as a bad omen, preceding war.

The work is inspired by these two majestic birds, their similarities, their differences and their connection to their people. In a wider sense it is also about bringing together the Duyuktv (Cherokee) and Māori people, United States and Aotearoa/New Zealand and the dance companies Ōkāreka and Exhale.

*"Mana Wahine* is above all a rich fusion of choreography, music, tikanga Māori and performance practices, AV, lighting and performance design ... enriched and enlivened by the dancing of five powerhouse performers."

Raewyn Whyte, **THEATREVIEW** on Ōkāreka Dance Company's *Mana Wahine*

# GENRE

In the formation of Ōkāreka Dance Company, Taiaroa Royal and Taane Mete (who has since left the company) sought to “fuse contemporary dance with Māori themes and other genres to create authentic, diverse works.”

Read about the history of Contemporary Māori and Pacifica Dance in Aotearoa on the Te Ara encyclopaedia here: [teara.govt.nz/en/contemporary-dance](https://teara.govt.nz/en/contemporary-dance)

## PRODUCTION AND TECHNIQUES

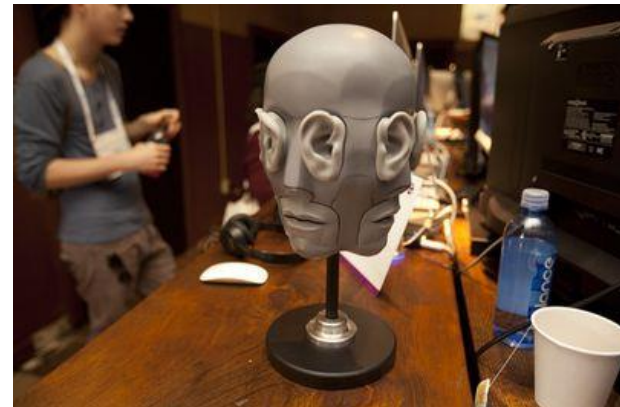
### MOVEMENT

“I handed out a feather to each dancer and said, ‘what does this mean to you, what does this provoke within you as a person as a dancer as an artist?’ We gathered movement from studying this feather.” Taiaroa Royal on an early workshop for *Hōkioi me te Vwōhali*

Soaring and swooping, inspired by the movements of the eagles. To create the movement vocabulary Taiaroa Royal watched many videos of Golden Eagles in flight. The choreography is inspired by both Māori and Duyuktv (Cherokee) movements and themes and aims to create something new out of traditional movements.

### SOUND

Utilising cinematic surround sound, the music composed by Maree Sheehan combines different sound elements from the two cultures. The three-dimensional experience transports the audience into the mystical world of the Hōkioi and Vwōhali. When researching the work in the United States, recordings of the whenua, rivers, traditional instruments and songs were made to act as starting points. Maree Sheehan has recorded Vwōhali in flight using a binaural microphone, capturing the power of the birds and their unique swooping.



3Dio's omni-binaural recording set-up. Image via [futureofstorytelling](https://futureofstorytelling.com/)

"You can hear a bird flying over your head. You'll hear a whisper in one ear." Read more about how Binaural sound works: [theverge.com/2015/2/12/8021733/3d-audio-3dio-binaural-immersive-vr-sound-times-square-new-york](https://theverge.com/2015/2/12/8021733/3d-audio-3dio-binaural-immersive-vr-sound-times-square-new-york)

### THEMES

**Collaboration:** Taiaroa from Ōkāreka has described the working relationship with Exhale dance company as a Tuakana-teina relationship, (older sibling-younger sibling). An older or more expert tuakana guides a younger or less expert teina. This relationship is a form of mentorship but is also a conversation or two-way street – a transference of knowledge between generations. In this collaborative work, the Hōkioi is the tuakana as the ancient bird, and the Vwōhali the younger learning from their ancestor.

**Spirituality:** One of the main connections the choreographers found between the Hōkioi and the Vwōhali are their role as messengers to the gods, having the power to fly up into the celestial realm and back to earth. Both Māori and Native American people hold the Hōkioi and the Vwōhali highly in the spiritual realms and this is reflected in the productions.

# FURTHER RESOURCES AND READINGS

**Note:** The Hōkioi is known as many different names in different parts of Aotearoa, when researching try searching for Haast Eagle, Pouakai, Hākuwai or Hākawai.

## WATCH

A compilation of pieces from Ōkāreka dance company's *Mana Wahine*:

[youtube.com/watch?v=AoeEHEZWrgM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=AoeEHEZWrgM)

Watch a video of Exhale Dance Tribe performing at Tedx Cincinatti:

[youtube.com/watch?v=8fYdYXeHwwY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=8fYdYXeHwwY)

## READ

Learn more about Ōkāreka dance company: [okareka.com/about/](https://okareka.com/about/)

Learn more about Exhale Dance Tribe: [exhaledancetribe.com/](https://exhaledancetribe.com/)

“New Zealand’s forests were once the home of the largest eagle in the world. This enormous bird had claws as big as a tiger’s, and could strike its prey with the force of a concrete block dropped from the top of an eight-storey building” Read about the Hōkioi and its history here:

[nzgeo.com/stories/terror-of-the-forest/](https://nzgeo.com/stories/terror-of-the-forest/)

“The Eagle flies higher and sees better than any other bird. Therefore, its perspective is different from other creations that are held close to the Earth, and it is closer to the Creator” Read about the importance of the Golden Eagle in Native American society: [eagles.org/what-we-do/educate/learn-about-eagles/golden-eagle-as-a-national-symbol](https://eagles.org/what-we-do/educate/learn-about-eagles/golden-eagle-as-a-national-symbol)

## LISTEN

Interview: Taiaroa Royal talking with Lynn Freeman about working collaboratively towards *Hōkioi me te Vwōhali* [From Spirit Eagles Land]: [nz.co.nz/national/programmes/standing-room-only/audio/2018727018/taiaroa-royal-flies-like-an-eagle](https://nz.co.nz/national/programmes/standing-room-only/audio/2018727018/taiaroa-royal-flies-like-an-eagle)

Listen to the call of the Haast Eagle recreated for Te Papa's *Te Taiao Nature* exhibition by Piers Gilbertson who joined Radio New Zealand in the studio: [youtube.com/watch?v=ppl0NJHRo9U](https://youtube.com/watch?v=ppl0NJHRo9U)

## GO FURTHER

You can visit the Pouakai (another name for Hōkioi or Haast Eagle) model at Te Papa's *Te Taiao Nature* exhibition before or after the performance. The links below will lead interesting bits and pieces about the Hōkioi model.

A video interview on TVNZ: [tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/nz-s-largest-predator-painstakingly-recreated-600-years-after-extinction](https://tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/nz-s-largest-predator-painstakingly-recreated-600-years-after-extinction)

Behind the scenes, making of the Hōkioi model [tepapa.govt.nz/visit/exhibitions/te-taiao-nature/behind-scenes-te-taiao-nature/watch-making-haasts-eagle-pouakai](https://tepapa.govt.nz/visit/exhibitions/te-taiao-nature/behind-scenes-te-taiao-nature/watch-making-haasts-eagle-pouakai)

Read about the history of the Hōkioi: [collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/1360](https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/1360)

# PROVOCATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

**Make sure to visit the Hōkioi model (called Pouakai or Haast Eagle) at Te Papa and see for yourself the largest eagle to ever live. You can find it in *Te Taiao, Nature* on Level 2, Te Papa Tongarewa.**

## PRE-FESTIVAL

Read through the information on the Festival website or brochure. What are your expectations of the performance?

What does it mean to work together with someone from a different part of the world? What would be hard about this? What would be interesting or exciting?

Discuss the Tuakana-teina relationship as a model for learning and collaborating. What value lies in this model? Do you have any relationships like this in your own life?

Research the Hōkioi (Haast eagle) and the Vwōhali (American Golden eagle). What movements would represent these birds?

## AT THE FESTIVAL

What sense of energy do I feel in the space? How do I feel?

What captures my attention in the space? The dancers? The set? The music? Why?

What questions do I have about the piece? What are the dancers trying to communicate?

## AFTER THE FESTIVAL

What was the dance piece about? Was there a story?

How did you feel when you were watching the performance?

What dance styles did you recognise? Did you see any movements that made you think of Ballet? Kapa Haka? Hip-Hop?

How do the dancers use their bodies to create the Hōkioi and Vwōhali? What choreographic devices could you see that communicated their story?

Were there any standout dancers for you? Why? What gave them presence? Discuss what stage presence is, how do we achieve it?

How were the cultures of the two companies integrated into the performance? What elements of Māori and Duyuktv (Cherokee) could you identify within the choreography and production techniques?

What did you notice about staging, lighting and costume? How did these support or enhance the story?

How did the sound design support or enhance the performance? What mood and effects did the surround sound create?

**Need something more? Contact your SchoolFest team with any questions about the performance.**

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