

## Waiata aroha

Waiata aroha is a song that expresses love, affection, or fondness for a person or kaupapa/event performed with appropriate hand and body actions. The waiata can be done in long form or a short piece. The waiata may pay tribute to a person or kaupapa/event at the time of the composition and/or the past. Identifiable as a waiata tangi or song of lament, together with the lyrics, its performance style confirms it as a waiata aroha.

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Tuini Ngāwai (Te Whānau a Ruataupare, Tokomaru Bay) composed several waiata ā-ringa that are sung today including *Arohaina Mai*. The tune for several of her waiata were from popular English songs at the time of the compositions. Several of her waiata, like *Arohaina Mai* and *E Te Hokowhitu a Tū*, were written during WWII for those who served in the 28<sup>th</sup> New Zealand (Māori) Battalion.

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*E Te Hokowhitu a Tū* was first performed at the memorial hui for Moana-nui-a-Kiwa Ngārimu at Whakarua Park in Ruatōrea, October 1943 where Ngārimu's father received the posthumous Victoria Cross (VC) for his son. To the tune of Glenn Miller's 1940s song *In The Mood*, *E Te Hokowhitu a Tū* was written to recruit and encourage the Māori Battalion. Written over a two-year period, the waiata was completed before the memorial hui where Ngāwai inserted the words of tribute to Ngārimu. While the lyrics and theme of the waiata differ to the lyrics and theme of *In The Mood*, its melody is easily recognisable and one that incites a sense of whakangahau when it is performed.

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Over time, some of the lyrics have changed while the actions generally remain the same. Along with several other waiata written by Ngāwai, this waiata is an anthem for the people of Te Whānau a Ruataupare and Ngāti Porou. The lyrics allow the waiata to be categorised as a waiata aroha, waiata tangi, poroporoaki, and whakangahau.

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A sense of wairua is evident in the waiata where Ngāwai writes 'Mā ngā whakaaro kei runga rawa rā, hai arahi ki te ara e tika ai' – *Let your thoughts be always heavenwards, to guide you along the path that is proper*. There is also a sense of kotahitanga and aroha throughout the waiata where she writes 'E Te Hokowhitu a Tū kia kaha rā, kāti rā te hingahinga ki raro rā' – *Oh brave band of Tū be strong, do not let yourselves be struck down* – and where she writes 'Ngā marae e tū noa nei, ngā maunga e tū noa nei, auē rā e tama mā, te mamae te pouri nui, e patu nei i ahau inā, kia kotahi rā' – *Lonely stands our marae, lonely stands our mountains, ah, for you, our sons, the pain and deep sadness, that beats deep within me, stand together as one*.

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The lyrics and actions of this waiata are typical of waiata written by Ngāwai and other waiata ā-ringa composers of her time – uncomplicated, deep with meaning, and composed for a person or for an event. As with many others of her waiata, Tuini used the musical device counterpart to embellish *E Te Hokowhitu a Tū* thus at one stage, verse 1 and verse 2 are sung simultaneously which produces a happy, light mood. Despite the happy, light mood, *E Te Hokowhitu a Tū*, perhaps one of Tuini Ngāwai's most famous waiata, will forever be associated with compassion, aroha and sorrow because of the kupu, the actions, and the occasion for which it was written.

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