

# **Voices in the Reo**

## **Music, Community and Membership in a Rātana Brass Band**

by

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# Abstract

This study explores the brass bands of the Rātana community. Te Hāhi Rātana (the Rātana Church) is a Māori Christian church based in Aotearoa New Zealand. Between 1932 and 1984 Te Hāhi Rātana established seven brass bands, which today constitute an amateur brass movement with over eighty years of history and several hundred active band members around the country. Rātana brass bands are widely recognised as emblematic of the Rātana Church and associated political movement, yet the bands gain only passing mention in New Zealand music histories and reference works. This thesis presents the first in-depth research about Rātana brass bands.

Based on fieldwork conducted over a one-year period, this thesis investigates Rātana brass banding in its community context. Taking a contemporary ethnographic approach, I explore aspects of symbolism, performance and membership, discussing some of the localised meanings and functions of the brass band in the Rātana context. The research presented in the thesis centred around interviews and interactions with members of one of seven Rātana brass bands, whose voices I incorporate into the text. Observations of the band members playing in church and marae contexts form the basis for narrative ethnographic descriptions and interpretive discussion. Drawing on ‘insider notions’ of community and banding, such as the idea of whānau (family), I explore the Rātana community and faith through the brass bands. This study considers some of the ways in which brass band music serves to bind and sustain the musical collectivities of the bands themselves, and the large, geographically spread, spiritual community of which they are a part.



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# Preface

## Making Connections

When I was a young child, my father—an ethnomusicologist—would mention the Rātana brass bands as we drove past the Rātana Road turn off on State Highway 3, on the way home to Wellington from trips north, simply saying “Oh, the Rātana bands!”, and leaving me to wonder what a ‘Rātana band’ might look or sound like. As a teenager, I learned that members of some of my favourite New Zealand bands hailed from Rātana, or had Rātana links—people like Ruia and Ranea Aperahama from Southside of Bombay, Billy TK of Human Instinct, and Dalvanus Prime of Patea Māori Club. I’d heard tell that every kid at Rātana Pā learned a brass instrument as an essential part of their education. Later, travelling around the country on tour with my own bands and driving past the same turn off, I knew Rātana Pā was the only destination along that road. I wondered whether all the kids down there really were blowing trumpets, tubas and trombones...

I had been considering approaching the Rātana brass bands with the idea of doing a research project for some time, but had been hesitant for several reasons: my lack of connection with Rātana; the fact that I am Pākehā and do not speak fluent te reo Māori; that I am not a brass player,<sup>1</sup> and was not raised in the church. What box *could* I tick? Still, my interest and curiosity grew, and I searched periodically for information about the Rātana bands. From the few bits and pieces I discovered, I began to get a sense of a longstanding brass band tradition with a rich history and a musical impact outside its own community boundaries. In spite of this, the bands gained only small mention in the available texts on Rātana and in New Zealand music histories. Still uncertain of whether I was the right person to conduct research with the Rātana bands but motivated by my growing interest, I looked for a personal connection with Rātana, and a way to talk some of the issues over with people in the community.

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<sup>1</sup> My first instrument is the flute.

<sup>2</sup> Rātana Church Committee

<sup>3</sup> Follower of the Rātana faith.

<sup>4</sup> Ihoa (God), Mōrehu (literally: ‘remnants’, ‘survivors’), Te Māngai (the Mouthpiece) (Anaru 1997c;

My introduction to Rātana Pā came through Jim Coogan, my good friend Bek’s father and a teacher at the local kura (school). Matua Jim, as he is known at the Pā, took Bek and I along to Temepara (Temple) one Sunday morning. After service, Jim introduced me to his colleague William Meremere, secretary of Te Komiti Hāhi Rātana<sup>2</sup> and long-serving member of the brass band based at Rātana Pā. It was easy to talk with William. I was amazed at the extent of his knowledge about Rātana history, faith, and bands, which we only scratched the surface in our first, two-hour meeting. Through William I sought further approval to undertake research from the Church Committee, and from the bandmaster of all the Rātana bands, Tahupōtiki (Tahu) Pikimaui, an accomplished cornet and trumpet player, playing in Brass Whanganui and well-known bands including LForty, Dam Raucous and RANEA. My first meetings with Tahu were quite reserved until we realised we had musician friends in common through attending jazz school in Wellington—my brief jazz education wasn’t a complete waste of time after all.

There is also a Rātana brass band based in Wellington where I live, but being non-Mōrehu<sup>3</sup> it felt more appropriate to begin the process of learning about the Rātana brass tradition from the ‘epicentre’ of the movement and Church, Rātana Pā. In retrospect this seems more appropriate still, given the position of the local band—the Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band—as the first band, or ‘elder sibling’ band, as I discuss further in chapter two.

This research has been a huge challenge for me. I have been preoccupied with staying open to local points of view, and at times have felt overwhelmed by the amount of information I encountered in the short timeframe of research and the many directions this study could have taken. Given the lack of existing literature on Rātana brass bands, this thesis might have taken the form of historic ethnography, and an exploration of the development of a Rātana brass tradition. However, a main interest for me was to incorporate musicians’ perspectives, paying attention to their experiences in the band and to how they themselves view the role of the band within the community. At the centre of this research, then, is a small number of current and former members of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band. Meeting and talking with these band

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<sup>2</sup> Rātana Church Committee

<sup>3</sup> Follower of the Rātana faith.

members was a highlight of this research for me, their voices personalise this study and they are introduced in further detail in the thesis.

Early on in research, and referring to the dual spiritual-physical aspects of a Rātana worldview, the bandmaster told me that ‘people may prefer to focus on the physical, because the spiritual can get pretty deep’. Soon afterwards, community archivist Arahi Hagger advised me to ‘look with spiritual eyes’. I have tried to take heed of both pieces of advice, allowing people to share what they feel comfortable with regarding the spiritual aspect of their music making, listening attentively to the way they speak and to the music itself.

### **Orthography of Te Reo Māori and English Translation of Terms**

In the orthography of te reo Māori including the use of macrons I follow Moorfield (2011). Where Rātana practice differs from this text, I follow the Rātana practice. I also follow the Rātana Church study texts (Anaru 1997a-d) in initial capitalisation of band names, including ‘o’ (of) and ‘te’ (the). English translations of terms in te reo Māori are generally given in parentheses following the first occurrence of the Māori term. Where a Māori term bears further explanation, and for longer phrases, words within narrative extracts and section headings, I have footnoted translations to avoid breaking the flow of writing with parentheses. Definitions of Māori terms are also given in a glossary, in which Rātana-specific meanings are identified.

I have attempted to write accessibly, and to write with a Rātana audience in mind as well as an academic and general readership. Interviews are referenced in-text by first name and interview date only. For the benefit of Rātana readers in particular, I have at points attributed information, as well as quotes, to interview sources. Given the scarcity of published material about the bands, I felt this to be an important way of identifying the channels by which I acquired particular information.



# Chapter One

## Introduction

Te Hāhi Rātana (the Rātana Church) is a Māori Christian church based in New Zealand, founded in 1925 by the prophet and faith healer Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana (1873 – 1939). The spiritual centre of Te Hāhi Rātana is Rātana Pā, near Whanganui in the North Island, but adherents of the Church are spread around the country and internationally. This thesis investigates Rātana brass banding in its community context through a focus on Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band. The brass band is active in community and church life at Rātana Pā where it is based, and where many join the band as young children. Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band is part of a larger musical collective of seven Rātana brass bands, each based in a different area of the country. And these bands are themselves part of a wider community of Mōrehu—followers of the Rātana faith.

Members of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band play liturgical music in church, march regularly in a number of contexts, fundraise for community projects, and play for social entertainment at large hui (gatherings). This study takes a contemporary focus, exploring the brass musicians' roles in church, marae and hui contexts. Based on ethnographic research conducted over a one-year period with members of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band and others at Rātana Pā, I investigate some of the many things that the brass players do in and for the Rātana Mōrehu community. In this chapter, I introduce the Rātana brass bands, and the Rātana Pā and Mōrehu communities. I also outline the methodology, interpretive concepts and relevant literature for this study. In order to discuss the Rātana brass bands in any depth, it is essential to have a basic understanding of Rātana history and faith. I therefore begin with a brief introduction to the Rātana Church and movement, and to some of the early bands that were musical precursors to the brass bands.

# The Beginnings of a Faith and The Growth of a Musical Community

The day is coming when you will see a man carrying his two books: the Bible and the Treaty of Waitangi. Listen to him.

—prophet Aperahama Taonui foretelling TW Rātana’s works, 1863.  
(Newman 2012, 248).

On November 8<sup>th</sup> 1918, a Māori man in the Rangitikei area of Aotearoa New Zealand saw a vision. Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana—at that time a farmer, family man, and follower of the Methodist Church—sat on the verandah of his homestead on the Waipū Block, between the Whangaehu and Turakina Rivers near Whanganui (Newman 2006, 45-6). Rātana saw glowing clouds gather out at sea and roll rapidly toward him. As the cloudbank arrived over his homestead it broke open, and Rātana saw “highways, roads and pathways from all over the world leading to his house” (Newman 2009, 33). This is considered the beginning of the emergence of the māramatanga (enlightenment, or enlightened teachings) that is the basis of the Rātana faith (Anaru 1997a, 7). The following weeks and months brought a ‘time of testing’, during which Rātana was presented with many challenges. He saw further divine visions and received visitations, including the message from Te Wairua Tapu (the Holy Spirit) that was to change his life’s direction and result in the establishment of a new Māori Christian church, political movement, and community of followers known as Mōrehu:

I, Ihoa, have heard the cry of the people. This is the reason why I have come to you, the Māori people, to be my footstool upon the earth. Go forth and unite the Māori people under me, Ihoa. Heal them in all their infirmities in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the Faithful Angels—those of the Māori people who follow you shall be called Mōrehu, and from this day forth you shall be called ‘Te Māngai’. (Anaru 1997a, 59).<sup>4</sup>

Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana (henceforth referred to as TW Rātana or Rātana) of Ngāti Apa and Ngā Rauru iwi, was born in 1873 at Te Kawau (Newman 2006, 45-6).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ihoa (God), Mōrehu (literally: ‘remnants’, ‘survivors’), Te Māngai (the Mouthpiece) (Anaru 1997c; Newman 2006, 54-58).

<sup>5</sup> Iwi (tribe).

Following the events of 1918 described above, Rātana made many prophecies throughout the remainder of his life, becoming known as Te Māngai, a mouthpiece for God (ibid., 58). He is considered one of the great Māori prophets, others of whom foretold his works (see epigraph, above). Te Māngai was also a faith healer, healing thousands of Māori and some Pākehā from physical illness by encouraging them to pray, and to open their “hearts and minds to God” (Anaru 1997a, 33).

The Rātana movement began as a non-denominational movement with a Christian basis, but amid growing friction with the established churches over perceived theological differences, TW Rātana and his followers established an official church—Te Hāhi Rātana—in 1925 (Anaru 1997a, 8). The Rātana cosmology consists of the Christian trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matua, Tama, Wairua Tapu) and, on lower tiers, the Faithful Angels (Ngā Anahera Pono), and the Mouthpiece (Te Māngai) (Newman 2006).

In 1936, the Rātana movement formed an alliance with the New Zealand Labour Party, and Rātana political candidates would dominate the Māori seats in Parliament for the next eighty years (Newman 2006). The works of TW Rātana, and of the Church and movement more broadly, are frequently discussed in two phases or categories. Te Ture Wairua (the Spiritual Works) encompasses Rātana’s healing works, ministry, and prophecy, and the establishment of the Church. Te Ture Tangata (the Physical Works) encompasses the political arm of the movement. The political work included efforts towards improved social and economic welfare at a time when Māori suffered drastic population decline, culture and land loss in the wake of European settlement, World War I, and the 1918 influenza epidemic (Anaru 1997a, 11; King 2003, 150). When engaged in these differing aspects of his work, TW Rātana used different names: in spiritual work, he was Te Māngai; in political work, he was Piri Wiri Tua (the campaigner), Wiremu Wiriwiri (trembling William), or simply Rātana (Newman 2006, 182).

### **Music for Unity, and the World Tour 1924-25**

By all accounts TW Rātana was a great music lover, and music was one of the tools—along with sports, kapa haka and other performance arts—used to unite Māori across tribal lines into a new community of Mōrehu, in accordance with the ideal of

kotahitanga (unity) (Anaru 1997c, 9; Tahu, 27/9/14). As followers began to gather on the Rātana family land, a new settlement grew, and music groups were established. “Those were the orchestras that were set up to help fundraise, but they were also set up to send out a message that Rātana was here to unite everyone under the one God” (Tahu, 27/9/14). In 1924, TW Rātana and a group of Mōrehu set out on the first leg of a ‘world tour’, seeking an audience with King George V over the New Zealand Government’s continued refusal to honour the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. Their purpose was also to spread the māramatanga, and to gain exposure for the Māori people at the British Empire Exhibition (Anaru 1997a, 15).<sup>6</sup> The party of close to forty people included twenty-four young musicians and performers, forming a ‘girls’ band’, ‘boys’ band’ and combined troupe that performed music, haka and poi (Newman 2009). Photographs of the world tour bands—said to be the first bands of the movement—show banjos, ukuleles, mandolins, violins, accordions, saxophones and clarinets, as well as trumpets, trombones and drums (see Figures 1 and 2). The musicians fundraised to support the party whilst on tour, and performed at most ports of call for entertainment, to raise funds for charity, and to draw attention to Rātana’s message (Newman 2009, 87; Tahu 2/7/14).

For those who were listening, if they just liked it for the entertainment factor, well, good. But if it touched people subliminally—using those genres to touch people’s hearts, to ignite something in the human consciousness—then it served its purpose (Ruia, 19/9/14).

In Japan, Rātana and his tour party met Bishop Juji Nakada and followers of the Japan Holiness Church, beginning an ongoing relationship with implications for the development of Rātana brass banding.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The tour itinerary included Sydney, England, parts of continental Europe, the Canary Islands, Cape Town, Egypt, Japan, China, Sri Lanka, and Singapore. In 1925, the second leg of the world tour was undertaken, to the USA (Newman 2006; Arahi Hagger pers. comm.).

<sup>7</sup> Nakada transcribed songs and hymns sung by the Rātana troupe, collating them into a book of arrangements for choir and band which he then gifted to TW Rātana (Newman 2009, 132). According to Rātana apostle Kereama Pene, the Church did not use notated music before this point (ibid.).





Figure 1 Members of the world tour girls' band, 1924. TW Rātana and Te Urumanao, back row at centre. Note the absence of brass instruments. (Rātana Community Archives).



Figure 2 Members of the world tour boys' band. TW Rātana, second row centre. (Rātana Community Archives).

After the expeditions to England and America, the bands of mixed string, wind and brass instrumentation played for church services and fundraised towards the costs of building at the new settlement on the Rātana family land, which would later become known as Rātana Pā.

### **The Move to Brass**

In 1932 TW Rātana began to establish brass bands that would become a respected chapter of the Church, playing liturgical music and working in service of the community as the mixed instrumental ensembles had done before them (Anaru 1997d). Why, at this point in time, the shift to a purely brass ensemble?

Talking to some of the elders, the change from the orchestra-type to the brass band was biblical. As we look at the time of Joshua and the seven trumpets of Jericho, it's really related to what this place [Rātana Pā] is all about (Tahu, 2/7/14).

Rātana felt that the mission to unite Māori under God required clearing away belief in Māori atua (gods, supernatural beings) and associated practices, which remained strong in Māori communities despite the fact that many Māori people had also adopted Christian beliefs by this point in time (Anaru 1997c, 9; King 2003, 148).

In the 1930s when Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana went out, one of the things he had to do was combat some of the witch doctors of the day. He used the brass band as part of the weaponry to take the fight to those tohunga...they would play the march *Blaze Away* to blow away the opposition and blaze the way forward for good versus evil<sup>8</sup> (William, 27/7/14).

The brass bands came to be conceptualised as the ‘spearhead’ of the movement, a metaphor that remains in use today. The clear biblical and military significances of trumpets were fitting to the cause. It seems TW Rātana also witnessed the powerful unifying potential of brass bands whilst on his world tour, when “his eyes were opened, in America he saw brass bands, in England he saw brass bands” (Kereama Pene in Pihama 2010). Rātana saw that large numbers of working class people followed the bands, and “he considered his own Māori people to be lower working class people too” (Tahu, 2/7/14). Just as the movement’s broader history is discussed in terms of the spiritual works and physical works, both spiritual (biblical) and physical (social, popular) inspirations are talked of in relation to the establishment of the brass bands.



**Figure 3** Members of the first Rātana brass band and Rātana leadership at the home of a Wellington chief, Lyall Bay, Wellington, 1936. (Rātana Community Archives).

<sup>8</sup> Tohunga (religious expert, healer, priest).

### **The Sounds of Brass Nearby: Early Brass Bands in New Zealand**

The first wind bands are said to have arrived in New Zealand with British imperial forces in the 1840s (Thomson 1991, 56). Growing numbers of informal civilian bands were established, and bands were also founded and sponsored by industries and civic organisations. Brass bands became a ubiquitous presence in European settler communities throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the first decades of the twentieth century (Bythell 2000, 226; Thomson 1991, 58). In Whanganui, just twenty kilometres northwest of the site that would become Rātana Pā, the Whanganui Garrison Band was formed in 1883, becoming champions in the national brass band contests (Newcomb 1980, 24). Brass and wind bands became popular in Māori communities in the late nineteenth century, thought to have been introduced by the Salvation Army which was active in New Zealand from 1883, and by brass band tours of the country (McLean 1996, 274; Kaeppler & Love 1998, 929). In 1897, Kīngitanga (the Māori King Movement) established a brass band that continues to operate today (Maipi 2014).

It seems highly likely that TW Rātana and his followers would have encountered the Whanganui Garrison Band and the King's Band, given the proximity of Rātana Pā to Whanganui, and interaction with Kīngitanga from the early years of the Rātana movement. It is important to touch on the broader historic context of brass bands in New Zealand in a study such as this. However, Suzel Reily warns against “simple developmental trajectories” (2013, 102) in the study of band traditions in former colonies, suggesting there are often more complex histories to be explored. Contact with nearby brass bands, and a tradition of brass bands in Māori communities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, may well have been influential in the founding and development of Rātana brass bands. However, in the local narrative the biblical significance of trumpets and the popularity of brass bands witnessed by TW Rātana on the world tours are emphasised as the main inspirations for the Church establishing its brass bands.<sup>9</sup> These aspects of history are of interest to me, as they link to the local, Rātana conceptions of the brass band, and are sources of meaningfulness in the community in the present day.

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<sup>9</sup> I base this sense of a ‘local narrative’ on the information shared in research interviews and conversations, and sources containing local perspectives such as Pihama (2010) and Anaru (1997a-d).



Figure 4 Rātana Mōrehu Brass Band leads the Queen's Guard in Marton during Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee tour of New Zealand, summer 1953/54. (Rātana Community Archives).



Figure 5 Pilgrimage to Te Rere O Kapuni waterfall, southern slopes of Mt Taranaki, 1965. A Rātana apostle at right, Kātipa (policeman) at left, and brass band members. (Photograph by Ans Westra. Reproduced with permission).

### **A Musical Emblem of Community**

Between 1932 and 1984 the Rātana Church established seven brass bands. Today, these bands constitute an amateur brass band movement with more than eighty years of history and over four hundred active band members around the country. On January 25<sup>th</sup> each year the Rātana movement attracts considerable media attention when politicians from New Zealand's major political parties visit Rātana Pā, a tradition that dates back to Rātana's historic relationship with the Labour Party (Newman 2006). Photographs in news media around the time of this annual hui



frequently feature Rātana brass musicians, making them widely recognised as representatives of the Rātana Church and political movement. The newspaper cartoons in figures 6 and 7, published in Wellington’s main daily newspaper, support the idea that the brass bands are a recognisable emblem of the Rātana movement.<sup>10</sup> In spite of this, there has been little written about the brass bands’ significance within the community and Church. The Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band is one of the seven Rātana brass bands. I met and undertook research interviews with several current and former members of this band, and it is through this lens—coupled with my attendance at a number of community events—that I begin to explore the Rātana brass tradition in this thesis.



**Figure 6** Former Prime Minister Helen Clark reads her own ‘report card’ to Rātana brass musicians at the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui.  
(Cartoon by Tom Scott, Dominion Post, 26 January 2007. Alexander Turnbull Library).



**Figure 7** Former Labour Party leader Phil Goff marches behind Rātana brass musicians, proclaiming the Labour-Rātana alliance stands strong.  
(Cartoon by Tom Scott, Dominion Post, 26 January 2010. Alexander Turnbull Library).

<sup>10</sup> I find Tom Scott’s depiction of Rātana musicians questionable. I include these images here because the cartoonist uses brass players to stand in for the Rātana movement, demonstrating that the Rātana brass bands are recognised by the newspaper’s readership.

# Ethnographic Setting

## Rātana Pā

The majority of fieldwork for this study was undertaken at Rātana Pā, the epicentre of the Rātana Church and political movement. Rātana Pā grew as a settlement on the Rātana family land during the years of Te Māngai's healing ministry, from the late 1910s (Newman 2006, 59; 74). The Pā is situated between the Whangaehu and Turakina rivers, twenty kilometres southeast of Whanganui in the North Island of New Zealand.<sup>11</sup> Set in a gently rolling landscape of close to eight acres and surrounded by farmland, Rātana Pā has a serene atmosphere, although it sits just two kilometres from a main highway. The small township of around one hundred homes has two locally-owned shops, and a kura (school), and at its peak is said to have had between six hundred and one thousand residents.<sup>12</sup> In recent decades the population has decreased, with families and many young people moving away for study and employment opportunities.<sup>13</sup> On Sunday mornings a steady stream of people arrives from Whanganui and other nearby towns for whakamoemiti (church service), and on major dates in the Rātana calendar like the January 25<sup>th</sup>, TW Rātana's birthday, the Pā population can swell to many thousands, with visitors coming from around the country and overseas. During this hui (gathering) the sound of brass instruments and the procession of people from one part of the Pā to another behind the brass bands seems almost constant, as I discuss in chapter four.

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<sup>11</sup> Pā (village).

<sup>12</sup> Newman gives a stable population of six hundred people in the Pā's "heyday", between the late 1920s and late 1930s (2006, 470). Ruia Aperahama cites eight hundred to one thousand people living at the Pā in the 1970s and 1980s (Ruia, 19/9/14).

<sup>13</sup> The current population is approximately 120 people according to the official census, and closer to three hundred according to community sources (Source: Statistics New Zealand; William, 27/7/14).



Figure 8 Partial North Island map showing Rātana Pā.  
(Source: Google Maps).

TW Rātana envisaged that “this Pā shall stand in the likeness of the House of Israel” (Newman 2006, 470), and there is a strong biblical symbolism to the major communal buildings and the naming of parts of the land at the Pā. The 2,000-seat Te Temepara Tapu O Ihoa<sup>14</sup> is an impressive Romanesque cathedral-style building with two large bell towers. The Temepara is heralded by a large archway through which sits TW Rātana’s tomb, surrounded by colourful flowerbeds. The Manuao (a transliteration of Man-o-War) is a large communal building. This building was completed in 1938 and dedicated to the Mōrehu by TW Rātana as a place of refuge for the times of change he foresaw (Newman 2009, 189).<sup>15</sup> The Temepara and Manuao—corresponding to the spiritual and physical aspects of the movement—dominate the landscape at the Pā.<sup>16</sup> The Temepara is the main site for communal worship, and the Manuao is a centre for many social and communal activities, including band rehearsals. It is between these buildings that Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band marches on Sunday mornings, as I discuss in chapter three.

Simply speaking, those resident at the Pā are followers of the Rātana faith. Although the Pā comes under the jurisdiction of the Rangitikei District Council, the Church administers much of the community’s affairs via various committees (Newman 2006,

<sup>14</sup> Sacred Temple of Jehovah (Anaru 1997d).

<sup>15</sup> The Manuao has also been referred to as ‘Te Āka’ and ‘Rātana’s Ark’ (Newman 2006).

<sup>16</sup> Other large buildings at the Pā are the school and the volunteer fire service building, both of which sit on the outer edges of the township.

471). The religious basis of the settlement makes it unusual in a New Zealand context, as does its majority Māori make-up (96%).<sup>17</sup>

Rātana Pā has long been known for its strong musicians and performers. In conversations and interviews, an image emerged of Rātana Pā as a very musical community, with numerous jazz bands, dance bands, a Rātana Musicians Club, and later rock and reggae bands all operating out of the tiny settlement over the years since its establishment. While the majority of fieldwork was undertaken at Rātana Pā, and some aspects of discussion are specific to this geographic locale, the Pā community is also part of a wider community of Mōrehu that is spread around the country and internationally.

## Te Iwi Mōrehu

Followers of the Rātana faith are known as Mōrehu, and as a community are called Te Iwi Mōrehu—The Tribe of Remnants<sup>18</sup> (Anaru 1997a, 12). According to the most recent state census, there are currently 40,000 Mōrehu living in New Zealand,<sup>19</sup> the vast majority of whom identify as Māori (98%) (Newman 2006, 468). Newman suggests there are 127 parishes of varying sizes around the country (ibid.). There are also significant numbers of Mōrehu living in Australia, Canada and elsewhere. The Rātana movement's pan-tribal nature is emphasised in the naming of this community as an iwi, a tribal group with common ancestry (Mead 2003).

In this thesis, I describe Te Iwi Mōrehu and the community at Rātana Pā as forming a 'spiritual community', as emphasised to me by participants in research. I also consider these collectivities, and the Rātana brass bands themselves, to be musical communities that are brought together, represented, and served in different ways by brass band music.

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<sup>17</sup> Source: Statistics New Zealand, census 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Also translated as 'scattered tribe' and tribe of 'survivors' (Newman 2006, 23).

<sup>19</sup> Source: Statistics New Zealand, census 2013. According to some research participants, official figures are lower than actual figures because 'Rātana' is recognised as a religious affiliation on the census but 'Mōrehu' is apparently not recognised, either as religious or iwi affiliation (Mary & Desiree, 13/9/14).



## Ngā Reo

There are seven Rātana brass bands, each based in a different part of New Zealand. Each of the bands operates as an individual unit in its area, and has its own distinctly coloured blazer relating to one or more of the symbolic colours represented in the whetū marama tohu (star and moon symbol)—the main symbol of the Rātana Church (see figure 9, below).<sup>20</sup> The bands are known collectively as Ngā Reo (The Voices), a name also used when the musicians play together as a ‘massed band.’<sup>21</sup> The bands congregate at the Pā for large annual hui such as those held on November 8th to mark TW Rātana’s first visions, and on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Representatives from the different bands may also make up a massed band to accompany the Church leadership on official visits outside the Pā. Tahu Pikimaui, the bandmaster of the seven-band collective at the time of this research, estimates several hundred members in the bands combined, with more members in training in the junior ranks. In interviews and conversations, the seven bands were talked of as a ‘collective’, a ‘movement’, and less formally as a ‘family’. The idea of family, or ‘whānau’, as a local notion of community and banding is something I expand on in this thesis.



**Figure 9 Whetū Marama tohu, the main symbol of Te Hāhi Rātana.**  
Each coloured point represents a figure in the Rātana cosmology.  
(Rātana Community Archives).

## Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band

This study centres around one of the seven brass bands—Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, which is based at Rātana Pā. Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band (RMSB) currently has a small membership, sometimes referred to as the core seven or “tight five” (Errol,

<sup>20</sup> The blazer of one of the seven bands is of a different symbolic colour, not represented in the whetū marama tohu. This band is not discussed in detail in this thesis.

<sup>21</sup> Although ‘Ngā Reo’ is technically a plural noun in te reo Māori, it was treated as a singular noun within English sentences in interviews and conversations, and I follow this local usage in the thesis.

31/8/14). Some current members recall the band's recent heyday in the 1980s, when a membership of over thirty players would pack into the band pews in the Temple for Sunday service. Those I spoke with put today's small numbers down to several factors, including population decline at the Pā, increased competition with children's extracurricular and leisure activities, and changes in community and wider societal values meaning that "you can't tell your kids what to do these days" (Gordon, 2/9/14).

Tahu Pikimaui, who is also the current bandmaster of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, described his ideal instrumentation as close to that of standardised New Zealand and British brass band instrumentation, requiring between twenty-five and twenty-eight players.<sup>22</sup> However, he also noted "I'm not fussed if I only have four players, at least the job is getting done" (Tahu, 27/9/14). RMSB members wear caps and dark blue blazers with a white trim, with blue representing Matua (God the Father), and white symbolising Tama (Son of God) (Newman 2006, 192; Arahi Hagger, pers. comm.). The band's repertoire consists of marches, hymns, other waiata (songs) and popular tunes. The majority of marches played by the band are of English, European or New Zealand composition, and are not unique to the Rātana brass repertoire (Tahu, 2/7/14). Rātana March is a notable exception to this, and I discuss this piece further in chapter four. Contemporary popular tunes are arranged and played for entertainment, for example as part of a band display at the January 25th Hui.

Many Rātana hymns are set to tunes from the Methodist hymnal, a significant number by American Gospel singer Ira Sankey, and to Children's Hosannah and Salvation Army tunes, among others. The hymn texts, as sung by the Koaea (choir) and congregation, are in te reo Māori. The texts have been written by members of the Church, with some thought to have come by direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit (Newman 2009, 132). Even those hymns in use by Māori congregations prior to the establishment of the Rātana Church (such as the doxology Ma Te Marie<sup>23</sup>), have been adapted to include Rātana-specific nouns like 'Māngai' and 'Te Iwi Mōrehu'.

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<sup>22</sup> I did not observe major differences in instrumentation or repertoire between the seven Rātana brass bands during my research. However, I keep my descriptions specific to RMSB here given that I have not worked closely with the other six bands, and there may be differences between bands operating in their own areas of which I am unaware.

<sup>23</sup> I was unable to discover who composed the original Māori version of Ma Te Marie. Henderson notes the Rātana version was written in 1924 prior to TW Rātana's tour to England, and describes it as "perhaps the best example (in brief) of Rātana theology" (1972, 75).

Āpotoro (church apostle) and former band member Ruia Aperahama explained how TW Rātana's wife, Te Urumanao, contributed to the development of an authentically Rātana hymnody:

Everything that [the Rātana movement and leadership] did, she recorded in song. She would sing it in the old melodies. That would be transferred from the old songs to hymns, then from the hymns...to the brass band. It was interpreted in different mediums, but the spirit of what she recorded was transferred right through to the brass band (Ruia, 19/9/14).

Until recently, Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band's repertoire included just five hymns, but has now expanded to include many of those sung by the Koaea, apparently following the lead of the Rātana brass bands based in the Far North of the country. "Back in the day when I started, we never, ever played the hymns that the Koaea sang. Now, we do it on a regular basis" (Errol, 31/8/14). While there continue to be certain hymns played more regularly than others, the bandmaster may now draw from a repertoire of over seventy hymns.

There is a great deal of interaction between Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band and the other bands in the collective. Members of RMSB travel to play together with other band members at events around the country. And musicians from the other brass bands visiting the Pā play with RMSB at Temple service. Some members of RMSB have also been members of one or more of the other Rātana brass bands in the past, when living elsewhere in New Zealand. For the sake of clarity, I will outline my use of terms in relation to the different musical collectivities here. For the most part, the musical collectivities discussed in this thesis are Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, the massed band made up of representatives from each of the seven bands (referred to as the massed band, or Ngā Reo), and the full collective of seven bands (referred to as the seven band collective, or Ngā Reo). Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band is also known by another name, Te Reo O Te Ārepa, which I shorten to 'Ārepa' or 'Ārepa band' at points in this thesis. The dual names of the seven bands are explained in further detail in chapter two. Throughout the thesis, I use 'the band' and 'the Reo', using context to make clear which collectivity of players I am referring to.

## Review of Literature

There is a limited amount of literature specifically about Rātana brass bands. My research involved a broader range of literature as context to this topic, including histories of the Rātana movement, studies of brass bands, and Māori music research. The literature reviewed below includes academic and general works, and texts produced within the Rātana community. These works have been written or created for diverse audiences, and with differing concerns.

### Rātana Movement and Brass Bands

Of the small amount of literature about the Rātana movement, the majority is of historical, political and religious focus, making little mention of the brass bands.<sup>24</sup> Journalist and author Keith Newman has published most widely on the Rātana movement, and I have drawn on his work for historic and contextual detail. His thoroughly researched *Rātana Revisited* (2006) notes the multiple functions of the brass bands as ‘church band’, ‘marching band’ and ‘big band’ (490), and other of his works briefly note the importance of music and brass bands in the Rātana community (for example, Newman 2009). *Ngā Akoranga* (Anaru 1997a, b, c & d) are four unpublished books of teachings about Rātana theology, history and the founder’s prophecies, written and compiled by members of the Church. Of these, *Ngā Akoranga: Te Pukapuka Tuawha* (The Fourth Book) contains a “Brief History of Ngā Reo, Ngā Pēne”<sup>25</sup> (Anaru 1997d, 77-84), which gives brief detail about the early history of the first six bands.

Major music reference works acknowledge the importance of brass bands in the Rātana movement, but give them only passing mention (for example, Kaeppler & Love 1998, 935; Thomson 1990, 6). In his major work *Māori Music* Mervyn McLean describes Rātana as “a significant political force, having dominated the four Māori seats in Parliament for many years” (1996, 22), but does not discuss the brass bands. In *Weavers of Song*, McLean notes: “Today, in the Waikato area, a brass band accompanies the Māori queen when she goes on tour, and the Rātana Māori church also has bands of its own, used during processions” (McLean 1999, 446). Recent

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<sup>24</sup> For example, Henderson (1972), Newman (2009) and Mathiesen (2006).

<sup>25</sup> Pēne (band).

scholarship investigates a range of themes in relation to Māori music and performing arts practices (Ka'ai et al 2013), including revival and contemporary practices of taonga puoro (Nunns & Thomas 2014), kaupapa and whakapapa in contemporary Māori music (Mitchell & Waipara 2011), tikanga in kapa haka competition (Biddle 2012), and indigeneity in Māori punk culture (Douglas 2014). In this thesis, I draw attention to brass bands as a form of Māori, Rātana music, and aim to contribute to filling the gap in New Zealand and Māori music research about Rātana brass bands.

I have found two sources that focus specifically on Rātana brass bands. *Voices of the Reo* (Wikiriwhi-Heta 2013) is a short documentary produced for a university film-making course. This film features interviews with members of several of the Rātana brass bands, with particular attention paid to female band members' perspectives.<sup>26</sup> David Hebert's article *Music Transculturation and Identity in a Māori Brass Band Tradition* (2008) is the only published academic work I have found that focuses on Rātana brass bands. Drawing on a framework of transculturation, Hebert seeks to illustrate how the Rātana brass bands' "historical development has produced a unique identity for this tradition" (2008, 173). This article focuses largely on the world tour of 1924 and interaction between Rātana's world tour party and Japanese Bishop Juji Nakada, which Hebert considers particularly important in the development of the Rātana brass tradition. Like much brass band literature, Hebert's article is historic in focus. I hope to expand on Hebert's work by offering insights into current practices of the Rātana brass bands, and by incorporating perspectives from Rātana brass musicians.

### **Brass Bands in Music Scholarship**

The history of the British brass band movement is well-researched (for example, Herbert 2000 & 2013). The dissemination of bands to 'the colonies' has also been discussed (Bythell 2000; Herbert & Sarkissian 1997), but there is not a great deal of published material about brass bands in New Zealand or the Pacific Islands. The small amount of literature dedicated to New Zealand brass bands focuses largely on Pākehā

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<sup>26</sup> Sadly, the film's presenter, Noroinia Pene—a young Mōrehu man and band member—passed away shortly after the film was completed. My thesis derives its title from this film.

and mainstream banding, and is mostly historical in focus.<sup>27</sup> Bendrups & Hoddinott's 2007 article *Brass Bands and Orchestras in New Zealand* takes a contemporary focus. In the Pacific Islands, David Kammerer's doctoral thesis (2008) explores the Tongan brass band tradition via a framework of indigenisation, and Helen Aldred's master's thesis (1997) is another in-depth study of Tongan brass bands. Aside from Hebert (2008), there do not appear to be other published studies about Māori brass bands.

Considering the long history of banding around the world, brass bands in former colonies and other locales have only recently become the focus of in-depth research in music scholarship. Authors have postulated various reasons for this neglect. Herbert identifies the genre's working-class origins and players' amateur status as reasons why 'art music' scholars may have deemed brass bands unworthy of serious research (2000, 119). Herbert & Sarkissian cite strong associations of colonisation and missionising from which ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have historically tried to distance themselves, as well as a former concern to "document native cultures before they 'died out'" (1997, 166), placing less importance on 'hybrid' musical genres (1997, 166). Duncan Bythell suggests music historians have been more interested in distinctively local musics, rather than 'derivative exports' such as the brass band, and that feminist scholars have been disinterested in banding, which continues to be a male-dominated musical pursuit (2000, 224). These points may well ring true in a New Zealand context. A further consideration as to why Rātana bands have not been the subject of in-depth research in New Zealand and Māori music scholarship may be because of a focus on traditional Māori performing arts and contemporary, distinctively Māori music in recent decades, perhaps associated with a cultural resurgence in the later twentieth century (see, for example, Kaeppler & Love 1998, 944; Mead 2003, 3).

Ethnomusicology studies of amateur music-making have included discussion of brass bands (for example, Finnegan 2007; Thomas 2004). The number of recent, substantial publications and academic studies about banding suggests that brass bands are an emerging area of interest in music scholarship. *Brass Bands of the World: Militarism,*

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<sup>27</sup> For example, Bythell (2000); Newcomb (1980). Thomson (1990) and Kaeppler & Love (1998) do mention a tradition of brass bands in Māori communities, though once again the focus is largely historic.

*Colonial Legacies, and Local Music Making* (Brucher & Reily, 2013) is a collection of musicology and ethnomusicology studies about brass and wind bands, many of which attend to how the brass band has diversified in different locales. This collection includes studies of brass traditions in Korea, Britain, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, Ireland, New Orleans and Portugal, and some contributing authors have also written sizeable theses on brass and wind bands (for example, Bruinders 2012; Sakakeeny 2008). Another notable work is Rob Boonzajer-Flaes' survey of brass bands in Ghana, Indonesia, Surinam, India and Nepal (2000). Gregory Booth's most recent work on Indian wedding bands, *Brass Baja* (2005), and Matt Sakakeeny's *Roll With It* (2013) about New Orleans brass bands, are both book-length ethnographies. Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands are under-represented in the brass band literature, particularly in terms of contemporary ethnography, and the present study aims to contribute to filling this gap.

# Methodology

## Fieldwork

I undertook fieldwork for this study over a one-year period, employing ethnographic methods of interviewing, observation of band performances, audio recording and, to a limited extent, musical participation. During this time, I made more than twenty visits to Rātana Pā and Whanganui, sometimes of several days duration, at other times only for one day due to performance commitments at home in Wellington. I conducted interviews with eight current and former members of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band and had many informal conversations with band members and others at the Pā about the local brass band, the wider Rātana brass movement, and other Rātana groups and music.<sup>28</sup> I travelled to Auckland to interview former band member and acclaimed te reo Māori songwriter, Ruia Aperahama, with whom I continued an online dialogue. I accompanied RMSB to Tūrangawaewae marae for the Māori King's Koroneihana (Coronation) celebrations, and attended the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui—the annual hui at Rātana Pā celebrating the birthday of TW Rātana. With consent, I made recordings of band performances (though never inside the Temepara, where recording is prohibited), some of which are included on a CD accompanying this thesis (see appendix one). The many YouTube videos of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band and other of the bands helped fill out my understanding—watching, listening, and studying comment threads as part of band-related discourse.<sup>29</sup>

As mentioned, Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band currently has a small core membership, though with higher numbers possible on any given day and at major community gatherings (Tahu, 2/7/14). The day I introduced myself to the band and the trip to Koroneihana influenced the way my research progressed: I went on to work with band members who were present on both occasions, and they facilitated my contact with former members. Initially, I aimed to leave interviews as open as possible. As research progressed and themes began to emerge, interviews became more structured.

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<sup>28</sup> I carried out nine interviews, two of which were with bandmaster Tahu Pikimaui. Another two of these interviews were conducted with two people present: former band member Mary Nepia with her friend Desiree Docherty; and former drum major Jim Rourangi with his wife, Bopsy.

<sup>29</sup> Note that RMSB was not rehearsing regularly during the period of research for a number of reasons including members' work schedules, so attending rehearsals did not form part of my fieldwork.



Those I interviewed shared anecdotes, thoughts and experiences, sometimes relating specifically to RMSB, at other times relating to the wider band collective, Ngā Reo. In this study, I incorporate their perspectives about both the musical collectivities, and combine them with my own interpretations of performance events. I do this mindful of the fact that each of the seven bands has its own history, diverse membership, and likely its own nuanced practices, and I aim to steer clear of generalising about aspects of practice within the other individual band units.

Taking heed of collaborative approaches to ethnography (Lassiter 2005), I had several consultation sessions with the bandmaster about the direction of research, and had ongoing contact with other research participants. I returned written transcripts of interviews to all interviewees, giving them the opportunity to edit or remove anything they were unhappy with. I dialogically edited interview transcripts with several research participants (Feld 2012), and sections of the thesis were also given to research participants for further quote-checking and feedback.

### **Attending Whakamoemiti<sup>30</sup>**

I adapted my initial approaches to research to fit with changing realisations. Early visits to the Pā were spent discussing research possibilities with Tahu, watching Te Reo O Te Ārepa march to and from Temepara, and carrying out interviews. Initially I thought attending whakamoemiti would not be part of my fieldwork, as I did not want band members to feel watched and analysed by me during worship. However a short time after starting fieldwork, the inclusive attitudes I encountered made me feel more comfortable about asking to attend church, and the response was positive: “everyone is welcome”. From then on I timed my visits to Rātana to be able to attend Sunday morning whakamoemiti. Attending services became a way of participating in the community and learning more about its values, people, history, and māramatanga. This was an important way of showing my commitment to and interest in understanding the brass music in its context, and it was at these times I most felt the effects of the music, listening to the interaction between the Reo, Koaea and congregation in the impressive acoustic of the Temepara. It was also once I started attending whakamoemiti that I began to enjoy myself, meet more people, and feel

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<sup>30</sup> Whakamoemiti translates as ‘prayer’ and ‘church service’ in the Rātana context, and I use the term in both senses in this thesis.

comfortable. I joined in singing hymns—many of which are based on tunes familiar to me from my father having been a church organist—at first under my breath in English, and later in te reo Māori when Mary would share her ‘Blue Book’ hymnal with me, and once I became familiar with some of the more frequent hymns. Not being a brass player precluded me from direct musical participation in the band. Joining the brass band, Koaea and congregation in hymns became a small but significant way of musically taking part in the community for me.

### **Archival Research**

There is minimal material about the Rātana bands in the relevant major archives.<sup>31</sup> However the Rātana Community Archives, housed at the home of Arahi and Puawai Hagger in Whanganui, contains a vast amount of material about the Rātana movement. Research at this community archive was dependent, to an extent, on me knowing what questions to ask in order to access relevant material and carve out a path through the dense history. This was quite different from my past experiences of plugging terms into a searchable electronic database and gleaning the results, a process that can be invaluable in developing a sense of the breadth of one’s topic, and in identifying focus areas. Given the scarcity of literature on Rātana bands and my limited knowledge in the early stages of research, knowing what questions to ask was in itself a difficult task at the beginning. Arahi was generous with his time in responding to my questions, sharing material about the bands— particularly photographs—and explaining some of the wider context of Mōrehu music and history.

### **Researching in a Māori Context**

The musicians I worked with all identify as Māori, as do the majority of Mōrehu. Scholars in a range of disciplines have outlined Māori concepts of research, and have developed research frameworks informed by Māori values, concepts of knowledge and worldview.<sup>32</sup> Hirini Moko Mead discusses the ‘Tikanga of Research’, and the principle of tika: correct values of respect, due process and

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<sup>31</sup> The major archives I refer to are: Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; New Zealand Sound Archives Ngā Taonga Kōrero, Wellington; Archive of Māori and Pacific Music, Auckland. It is interesting to note that the Mobile Recording Unit did not record the Rātana brass bands, although the MRU began its first tour in 1946 in Whanganui, very near Rātana Pā (Thomas 2004).

<sup>32</sup> For example, Cooper (2012), Mahuika (2008), Mead (2003) and Smith (2012).

consultation (2003, 317-321). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) outlines Kaupapa Māori approaches to research, and describes ‘indigenous methodologies’:

Some methodologies regard the values and beliefs, practices and customs of communities as ‘barriers’ to research...Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology (Smith 2012, 15-16).

I have tried to work with an awareness of the values underpinning indigenous methodologies and Kaupapa Māori approaches in this research. Regular consultation with research participants and with the community archivist has been a part of my research process, and I have tried allow for band members’ input into the direction of research. I consider these things important not because I am a Pākehā researcher working with Māori musicians, but because I believe everyone involved in research deserves this kind of respect and consultation. These are some of my personal values in research, and I feel they go some way toward meeting recommendations made by Smith, Mead and others about researching in a Māori context.

Te reo Māori is said to be the language most appropriate to spiritual matters in Te Hāhi Rātana, and is used in prayers and hymns.<sup>33</sup> All research participants are native speakers of English, who report different levels of fluency in te reo Māori. However I feel that being unable to fluently speak and understand te reo Māori has been a limitation for me as a researcher in this context. Outside Tūrangawaewae marae, Tahu addressed the massed band in te reo Māori and said prayers on behalf of the group. Watching on with a small group of onlookers, I could pick up on key nouns and the gist of what was being said, but felt—not for the only time—there is much of the spiritual element of the Rātana brass bands that I cannot access directly, in the language in which it is expressed. With this awareness, I consider this study a first step in engaging with the Rātana brass community. In spite of the limitations of this research, I hope this thesis is in some way a “work of value” (Mead 2003, 318).

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<sup>33</sup> At times there has been controversy over the publication of information about the Rātana Church and theology in English (see Preface in Newman 2006). When I gained consent to write this thesis it was known that I would write it in English, and the major publications and theses about Rātana are also in English (see, for example, Henderson 1972; Newman 2006, 2009; Mathiesen 2006).

# Approaches to Ethnography

## Fieldnote as Narrative

The use of narrative is well-established in music ethnography.<sup>34</sup> In this tradition, I have developed fieldnotes into narrative extracts using the present tense. In these segments I aim to communicate a sense of the performance events experienced in fieldwork, with some immediacy. Overall, I do not employ an overtly subjective approach to ethnography, but in the narrative extracts I retain the first person voice of my fieldnotes, at points attempting to show how people responded to me and how I gained certain insights ‘in the field’. Throughout the thesis I draw attention to information shared with me by musicians or others in the community, and I feel that making these channels of information apparent is another acknowledgement of ‘how I came to understand’ (Todd-Titon 2008, 34).

## Multiple Voices

Ethnographers have experimented with incorporating the voices of research participants into written ethnographies to varying extents (see, for example, Fox 2004; Sakakeeny 2013). The inclusion of multiple voices is part of broader “changes in representation that involve an acceptance of multiple truths, multiple epistemologies” (Barz & Cooley 2008, 22). This study centres around interactions and interviews with a small number of musicians and I have tried to incorporate their voices into parts of the thesis, hoping to communicate the debt my nascent understanding of Rātana brass bands owes to those I worked with. I have taken care to make the transition from spoken to written language a smooth one (Lassiter 2005, 128-9). Including multiple voices in this thesis is also motivated by a desire to add musicians’ perspectives to the growing body of literature about brass bands, joining other authors who incorporate band members’ perspectives into their ethnographies (for example Sakakeeny 2013, Bruinders 2012). I have used conventional formatting in the presentation of quotes: short quotes appear within the main text, and lengthy quotes are indented and set apart from the main text. At several points I employ a ‘script-style’, and here I want to draw attention to the moment of interaction in a research interview or other exchange, or

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<sup>34</sup> See, for example, seminal works such as Seeger (1987), Rice (1994) and Feld (2012). See also Fox (2004) and Sakakeeny (2013).

pull musicians' voices into textual conversation with one another to illustrate a particular point.

### **Performance Events**

In the thesis, I describe three main performance events experienced in fieldwork, and for the most part these are outdoor, marching and processional events. These performance events involved different groupings of musicians within the Rātana brass band collective, and contrasted in terms of their location and context (in church or on the marae, for example). I felt that an exploration of each event could reveal different aspects of the musical collectivities and community(ies) involved, contributing to an understanding of the bands and music in social context. Witnessing RMSB's Sunday march at the Pā on numerous occasions allowed me to compare different occurrences and build a composite picture of this regular event in communal life and worship. Travelling through the night along with band members to Koroneihana, and staying for the course of the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui, led to an appreciation not just of the musical performances themselves, but also of other aspects of band membership and performance: the travelling, waiting, prayers framing band performances; post-performance critique by band members; and the amount of planning and organisation required—often at a community-wide level—for such events to take place.

As well as discussing some of the current practices of RMSB and Ngā Reo, I have incorporated aspects of history into this study. I do so partly as context to the discussions made in the rest of the thesis, and because the early history of Rātana brass bands is not easily accessible in published form. Paying attention to history is also motivated by the importance that many I spoke with placed on historic events, both in terms of the brass bands and the Rātana movement in general—senses of history that resonate strongly in the present.

### **A Note on Notation**

I briefly discuss two pieces of music from the Rātana brass repertoire in this thesis: the hymn Ma Te Marie, and Rātana March. It is important to note here that I do not represent these pieces in notation, at the request of the bandmaster at the time of this research, who felt concern for the potential misuse of the music if disseminated in notated form (Tahu, 27/9/14). I felt that, given my study's focus on social and cultural

factors, the lack of notation would not be a serious shortcoming. I refer the reader to the enclosed CD of field recordings of Rātana March for an impression of this piece. Note that these audio recordings were made primarily for my own study purposes, and several of those included on the accompanying CD are of poor quality or short duration. However I have chosen to include them as brief illustrations of the band's sound. An historic recording of Ma Te Marie is also included on the CD but field recordings of hymns were not made during research, due to the restriction on recording of any kind during church services.

# Interpretive Setting

This study investigates Rātana brass banding in its community context through a focus on one of the seven bands, and by exploring particular performance events and experiences of membership. I take up interpretive concepts from ethnomusicology, including themes from recent research about brass bands, which are relevant to the topic and to the material gathered in research. I looked for a local basis for a theoretical framework,<sup>35</sup> in the hope this study may be meaningful to band members and to help bridge “the gap between academically positioned and community-positioned narratives” (Lassiter 2005, 4). In conversations and interviews, musicians emphasised the importance of community in relation to the band while also pointing to the diversity of individual band members’ experience, saying “everybody’s journey in this is personal” (William, 27/7/14). These starting points resulted in a study that weaves several themes into a broader framework of music and community, while attempting to retain sight of the individual within the collective. I aim to create a picture of some of the distinctly Rātana meanings and functions of the brass band, and of the brass musicians at work in their community.

The term ‘community’ has been critiqued by scholars as homogenising and ambiguous, and studies of music in geographically-bounded locales had begun to diminish by the early 1990s (Shelemay 2011, 356, 359).<sup>36</sup> Since this time ‘community’ has increasingly been considered mobile, multi-sited and imagined, with notions of global, virtual, and taste-based musical communities becoming commonplace. Kay Shelemay argues for the continued relevance of ‘community’ in ethnomusicology, putting emphasis not on defining what a musical community *is*, but on what music *does* for a community, with music as “an integral part of processes that can at different moments help generate, shape, and sustain new collectivities” (ibid., 350). Shelemay asserts that the term ‘community’ “provides an opportunity both to have a conversation that does not require translation, and to bring together the perspectives of research associates with the scholar’s efforts at interpretation” (ibid.).

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<sup>35</sup>Beaudry calls this a ‘non-model’ approach (2008, 229-31).

<sup>36</sup>Benedict Anderson’s concept of ‘Imagined Communities’ (2006) continues to be important in scholarship. Many aspects of this theory would be useful to the present study. However, while it is clearly understood in academic circles that ‘imagined’ in this context does not mean ‘imaginary’, I found ‘imagined’ a difficult term to use in a relation to a community founded on religious belief, potentially open to misinterpretation by readers unfamiliar with Anderson’s work.

Anthropologist Anthony P. Cohen thinks of community not as a formation in need of definition, but as a matter of feeling between people, suggesting “we try to understand community by seeking to capture members’ experience of it” (1985, 19-20). These ideas suggest that ethnographic methodologies have much to offer scholarly understandings of music and community. In the minimal literature about Rātana brass bands, an ethnographic account of the bands operating within their community context is especially lacking.

The present study investigates some of the things that brass music and banding ‘do for community’ in the Rātana context, in which brass bands are an integral part of social and spiritual communal life. Many ethnomusicology studies have considered music’s role in generating social connections.<sup>37</sup> Shelemay defines a musical community as “a social entity, an outcome of a combination of social and musical processes, rendering those who participate in making or listening to music aware of a connection among themselves” (Shelemay 2011, 365). In this thesis I consider some of the ways in which the community at Rātana Pā, the wider community of Te Iwi Mōrehu, and the brass band collectivities themselves are brought together, served and sustained in differing ways by band music. Drawing on Rātana concepts of community and banding, I explore this Māori religious community through its music-making. I discuss the idea that brass music and banding generates a sense of Mōrehu identity and community through shared musical experience, and investigate some of the roles carried out by band members in church and on the marae. In chapter four I consider participatory band processions a site for ‘musicking’ community (Small 1998).

The transformation of space through music and performance is an important theme in this study. Soundscape studies and the construction of space and place through music have grown as areas of interest in ethnomusicology in recent decades.<sup>38</sup> Brass and wind bands are rich sites for the exploration of such themes in terms of live performance, and their mobility and ability to project outdoors make band processions an exemplary kind of “spatializing performance” (Brucher & Reily 2013, 19).<sup>39</sup> Band marches are a weekly occurrence at Rātana Pā, and are also a loud, conspicuous

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<sup>37</sup> For example, Turino (1984, 1993, 2008), Bruinders (2012, 72) and Shelemay (2011).

<sup>38</sup> For example, Feld (1996, 2012), Sterne (1997) and Sakakeeny (2010).

<sup>39</sup> Sakakeeny (2010), Booth (2005) and Bruinders (2013) are examples of recent studies that consider band processions as constructive of place, social space and sonic environment.



feature of large Mōrehu community gatherings hosted there. In the present study I take the Rātana concept of ‘clearing the way’ as a starting point for exploring the construction of space through band marches and processions at Rātana Pā, and on a marae outside the Pā.

Many recent studies of brass bands trace the development of ‘locally distinctive’ brass traditions in different locales around the world, frequently drawing on frameworks of cross-cultural musical change.<sup>40</sup> In this study, I do not investigate processes of development over time via a framework of change, but instead focus on an ethnographic study of music in the community. This has involved looking at how the band members operate in the uniquely Māori context of the marae, and exploring some of the distinctly Rātana meanings with which the brass bands are invested. Brass bands give the Rātana movement a distinctive way of operating on marae, and help to maintain its social and political connectedness in this context of interaction and relationship building. The marae examples discussed in this thesis also illustrate the intersection between Māori cultural practices, brass bands and spirituality in the Rātana setting, and point to further research possibilities in this area. Overall, I suggest that the essential roles fulfilled by the brass bands, the social connections they generate, and the particular local meanings with which they are invested make them an integral part of Rātana lifeways.

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<sup>40</sup> Examples include Herbert (2013), Reily (2013) Booth (2005). Kammerer (2008) uses a framework indigenisation. Booth (1990) draws on the concept of enculturation. Hebert (2008) employs a framework of transculturation.

# Outline of Thesis

Chapter two further introduces the seven-band collective, Ngā Reo, with a focus on Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band. A dual spiritual-physical Rātana worldview is explored in relation to the bands, and aspects of symbolism are discussed. Personal histories illustrate experiences of membership of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, and this band is located within its community context at Rātana Pā. This chapter draws on ‘whānau’ and ‘kotahitanga’ as insider notions of community and banding.

Chapter three describes the brass musicians playing in church and marae contexts: Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band marching to Temple and playing in church service on Sunday mornings at Rātana Pā; and members of Ngā Reo playing at the Māori King’s coronation celebration at Ngāruawāhia. Band marches are considered in relation to the transformation of space, and band members’ roles on the marae are explored.

Chapter four takes a closer look at Rātana March, the ‘anthem’ of the movement, which has formed a musical constant throughout the events described in chapter three. This chapter discusses the significance of the March in generating a sense of Mōrehu identity and feelings of belonging to the Mōrehu community. Rātana March, the brass band collectivities and different band performance contexts are then contextualised in an ethnographic account of a major gathering of Te Iwi Mōrehu: the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui at Rātana Pā.

Chapter five summarises the main ideas of the thesis and examines the contributions of this study to New Zealand and Māori music studies, to the growing body of research about brass bands, and to ideas about music’s role in shaping and sustaining communities.

# Chapter Two

## Brass Voices:

### Meaning and Membership

### in the Rātana Brass Band ‘Family’

Each of the seven Rātana brass bands has both a ‘physical’ and a ‘spiritual’ name, pertaining to coexisting elements of what might be termed a Rātana worldview. This chapter begins with a brief introduction to these aspects of worldview as an entry point into further discussion of the brass bands. TW Rātana’s ministry and the Rātana movement more broadly are often discussed in terms of Ture Wairua (the Spiritual Works) and Ture Tangata (the Physical Works) (Anaru 1997c, 9; Newman 2009, 135). The ‘spiritual’ and ‘physical’ have been described as related elements of Māori worldview, and equated with metaphysical and material realms.<sup>41</sup> William Meremere—Church Committee Secretary, recently retired from Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band after forty years’ membership—puts it succinctly:

In Māoridom, we tend to look at things in two different ways: we recognise that there is a physical here and now, but there is also a spirituality to *everything* that we do...we live in two separate worlds at the same time, a physical world, and a spiritual world as well. It’s part and parcel of being Māori (William, 27/7/14).

While not specific to the Rātana community, it seems there are particular Rātana articulations of these spiritual and physical elements, which can be found represented or made manifest in numerous ways: for example, in the movement’s founding texts (the Bible and the Treaty of Waitangi); in the main communal buildings at Rātana Pā (the Temple and the Manuao); and in TW Rātana’s sons, Te Ārepa and Te Ōmeka, representing the spiritual and physical sides of the movement respectively (Mathiesen 2006, 53-24). A story of encounter between TW Rātana’s family and two beached whales in early 1918 encapsulates this spiritual-physical duality, with one whale taken to represent the spiritual law, and the other the physical law (Anaru 1997c, 54). Some

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<sup>41</sup> Rev. Māori Marsden describes a Māori worldview based on a conception of the universe as “at least a two-world system in which the material proceeds from the spiritual, and the spiritual (which is the higher order) interpenetrates the material physical world” (in Royal 2003, 178).

authors have characterised the spiritual and physical in the Rātana context as a dichotomy, a term that can emphasise opposition or contradiction between two parts.<sup>42</sup> I refer to the spiritual and physical as coexisting elements of a dualistic Rātana worldview, reflecting William’s description, above. Rather than attempting a conclusive definition, however, I have been more interested to learn about the implications of this dual worldview in terms of the bands, music, and band member experience.

In the brass band context, the most immediately obvious expression of the spiritual and physical is found in the bands’ dual names. Each band has a physical name, which is mostly in English, and a spiritual name in te reo Māori. These names are not translations of one another, but have different meanings and are used when a band performs in different contexts. A band’s physical name identifies its locality and the type of instruments played (whether brass or silver), and signals that this is a Mōrehu band. The bands’ spiritual names are less easily accessible without some knowledge of Rātana history and te reo Māori. These spiritual names offer a starting point for considering the local meanings of the brass bands in a Rātana context, and the bands’ position and roles within the community and Church.

In this chapter, I introduce the seven bands in the Rātana brass band ‘family’ as context to the rest of this study, and focus in on Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, the ‘elder sibling’ of the band family. I consider some of the symbolic meanings of the bands, primarily through an exploration of the spiritual names. I then turn to experiences of membership in Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, attempting to introduce some of the voices of those I worked with, and to locate RMSB within its community context at Rātana Pā. The musicians discuss joining, learning, developing valued musical skills and personal qualities, and realising the spiritual significance of the band over many years of membership. I suggest that band membership can be taken as an expression of commitment to community and faith at Rātana Pā—a small community that appears to value individual participation highly.

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Mathiesen (2006, 53, 63).

The idea of whānau, or family, as an ‘insider notion’ of community (Shelemay 2011) acts as a bridge between the symbolic meanings of the bands and the lived experiences of band membership discussed in this chapter. The physical and spiritual elements of Rātana worldview thread throughout, however I do not equate ‘spiritual’ with symbolism and ‘physical’ with lived experience—as noted, the spiritual and physical coexist in “everything that we do”.

## **Brass Beginnings: The Establishment of Seven Brass Bands**

In 1932, the first purely brass ensemble was formed at Rātana Pā, and was named Rātana Mōrehu Brass Band.<sup>43</sup> The brass instruments arrived at the Pā on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and soon afterward TW Rātana dedicated the instruments inside the Temple, where the band was given the spiritual name Te Reo O Te Māngai (The Voice of the Divine Mouthpiece) (Anaru 1997d, 77). Paraire Karaka Paikea became the first bandmaster, and Eruera Tihema Tirikatene acted as his second in command. Both men were close advisers to TW Rātana and significant figures in the movement’s leadership (Newman 2006, 23, 75). According to interviewees, the brass band played in church services from its establishment, as the mixed-instrumental bands had done before it. The ‘Brief History of Ngā Reo, Ngā Pēne’ (Anaru 1997d, 77-84) documents some of Rātana Mōrehu Brass Band’s other early activities, including its public debut at the Rangitikei Hunt Club Race Meeting in Marton on 20th July 1932, and its next outing several days later, playing through the main streets of Hastings and onto the pitch in advance of the Māori hockey and football tournament. Here, “the people marveled at what they heard and saw and for many, the thoughts went back thirty years before, when Māori Bands were in existence” (ibid., 77).

Before his death in 1939, TW Rātana established three more brass bands, with the physical names, establishment dates and locations as follows: Kaikohe Mōrehu Brass Band, 1934, based in Northland; Hawke’s Bay Mōrehu Brass Band, 1935, based in Hawke’s Bay; Mangakahia Mōrehu Brass Band, 1935, based in Northland (Anaru 1997d, 77). It was Rātana’s intention to establish a band in each of the koata (quarters) equating with the four Māori seats in Parliament that existed at that time in

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<sup>43</sup> Information about the establishment and naming of the seven brass bands has been collated from interviews with band members, Anaru (1997d), Newman (2006) and personal communication with community archivist Arahi Hagger.

the north, south, east and west of the country, so that each band could serve and protect the Mōrehu in its area.<sup>44</sup> However, in 1935 a group of Mōrehu from Mangakahia in Northland gifted a set of twenty-eight silver instruments to Rātana Mōrehu Brass Band at Rātana Pā. It was in recognition of this gift that the band at Mangakahia was established, although one band—the Kaikohe Mōrehu Brass Band—already existed in the north of the country (Tahu, 2/7/14). The gift of silver instruments also prompted a physical name change for the band based at Rātana Pā to Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, which remains the physical name of that band today (Anaru 1997d, 81).



Figure 1 TW Rātana and members of the first brass band, Rātana Mōrehu Brass Band, in 1934. (Rātana Community Archives).

As with much of Rātana history, the history of the brass bands is touched with divinity. On September 1st 1935 at Rātana Pā, members of Te Reo O Te Māngai presented a kawenata (covenant) regarding the purpose of the band to TW Rātana for his approval. “They presented their kawenata before him and he said to them, ‘this covenant is above me, but you will be given a sign’ ” (Gordon, 2/9/14). Then, “almost at once, snow began to fall upon the members of the ‘Reo’, and the Mōrehu saw, and marveled, and prayed” (Anaru 1997d, 80). This snowfall, one of few recorded at the Pā, was taken as the foretold sign—a divine confirmation of the band’s new covenant.

<sup>44</sup> In 1928, TW Rātana declared his intention to contest the four Māori parliamentary seats, symbolically dividing his ‘body’ (as an analogy for the country) into four quarters. Paraire Paieka and Eruera Tirikatene were two of the first four Rātana members of Parliament, known as Ngā Koata e Whā (The Four Quarters) (Newman 2006, 23; 75; 135). There are currently seven Māori electorates, and Rātana Pā is in Te Tai Hauāuru electorate.

Te Reo O Te Māngai was then renamed spiritually as Te Reo O Te Ārepa, Te Ōmeka, Piri Wiri Tua, Hāmuera me Te Māngai<sup>45</sup> (ibid., 81). “That’s when they made the transition from the one band to the four...this band [at the Pā] held all five names actually, before they were whāngai’d out”<sup>46</sup> (Gordon, 2/9/14). The spiritual names were gradually given out to the other existing Rātana brass bands, as outlined in the table in figure 2, below. When these four bands come together, it is said “the original band, Te Reo O Te Māngai, is present. It’s a unity thing” (Tahu, 2/7/14).  
(*CD Track 1, historic recording*).

Physical name Location of band	Spiritual name	Namesake
Rātana Mōrehu Brass Band  In 1935, renamed Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band  Rātana Pā	Te Reo O Te Māngai (The Voice of the Divine Mouthpiece)  After 1935, renamed Te Reo O Te Ārepa (The Voice of the Alpha)	Te Māngai, a name used by TW Rātana during spiritual work  Te Ārepa Rātana, TW Rātana’s son
Mangakahia Mōrehu Brass Band  Mangakahia, Northland	Te Reo O Te Ōmeka (The Voice of the Omega)	Te Ōmeka Rātana, TW Rātana’s son
Kaikohe Mōrehu Brass Band  Kaikohe, Northland	Te Reo O Piri Wiri Tua (The Voice of the Campaigner)	Piri Wiri Tua, a name used by TW Rātana during political work
Hawke’s Bay Mōrehu Brass Band  Hawkes’ Bay	Te Reo O Hāmuera (The Voice of Samuel)	Hāmuera Rātana, TW Rātana’s son

Figure 2 The first four Rātana brass bands – physical names, spiritual names and namesakes. Information compiled from Anaru (1997d, 81-82) and interviews with Tahu Pikimaui.

After TW Rātana’s death in 1939, the Church formed three more brass bands, which are sometimes referred to as the memorial or commemorative bands (see figure 3, below). In 1944, the Tauranga Mōrehu Brass Band was founded, and was given the spiritual name Te Reo O Rātana Te Tuatoru (The Voice of The Third Rātana) in

<sup>45</sup> The Voice of the Alpha, the Omega, the Campaigner, Samuel, and the Divine Mouthpiece (Anaru 1997d, 81).

<sup>46</sup> Whāngai (to foster). Whāngai within the extended family is a customary Māori practice (Moorfield 2011). TW Rātana himself was ‘whāngai’d’ (Newman 2006, 46).

1945. This band commemorates Matiu Rātana, TW Rātana's son and the third member of the Rātana family to hold the position of church Tumuaki (president). In 1980, the Wellington Mōrehu Brass Band was established, and was given the spiritual name Te Reo O Ngā Tuāhine (The Voice of The Sisters) in 1982. This band commemorates TW Rātana's daughters, for the witness they bore to their father's works, and for the work they themselves carried out in the Church. The last band—Waipounamu Mōrehu Silver Band—was founded in the South Island in 1984, and was later given the spiritual name Te Reo O Te Whaea O Te Katoa (The Voice of the Mother of All).<sup>47</sup> This band commemorates TW Rātana's first wife, Te Urumanao (Tahu, 2/7/14).

Physical name Location of band	Spiritual name	Namesake
Tauranga Mōrehu Brass Band Tauranga	Te Reo O Rātana Te Tuatoru (The Voice of the Third Rātana)	Matiu Rātana, the third member of the Rātana family to be president of the Rātana Church
Wellington Mōrehu Brass Band Wellington	Te Reo O Ngā Tuahine (The Voice of the Sisters)	TW Rātana's daughters Te Reo Hura, Piki Te Ora & Rāwinia
Waipounamu Mōrehu Brass Band South Island	Te Reo O Te Whaea O Te Katoa (The Voice of the Mother of All)	Te Urumanao, TW Rātana's first wife

Figure 3 The three 'commemorative' Rātana brass bands – physical names, spiritual names and namesakes. Information compiled from Anaru (1997d) and interviews with Tahu Pikimaui.

After the founding of Waipounamu Mōrehu Silver Band in 1984, it was decided no further bands would be established, in part due to the biblical significance of the number seven:<sup>48</sup>

As we look at the time of Joshua and the seven trumpets of Jericho, it's really related to what this place [Rātana Pā] is all about. Back then [when the brass bands were first established], they would have been like the seven trumpets of Jericho. But I think today they are more like the seven trumpets of Revelation,

<sup>47</sup> Waipounamu (literally, 'greenstone waters') is one of several Māori names for the South Island of New Zealand.

<sup>48</sup> In the 1990s a Reo was established in Sydney, where a large Mōrehu community exists. However the existence of an eighth Reo has since been called into question, and the 'Reo' status of this band is currently under review (Tahu, 2/7/14).



and they go hand in hand with the seven angels, the seven seals (Tahu, 2/7/14).

The shift in biblical symbolism described here by the bandmaster, Tahu, indicates the changing nature of the bands' work, along with the changing times. In the early years of the movement, the brass bands were seen as breaking down the walls of the old ways to spread the belief in one God, akin to the ram's horn trumpets of the Israelites that brought down the walls of Jericho (Newman 2006, 24; Tahu, 2/7/14). The above quote suggests that the seven trumpets of Revelation make a more fitting symbolism for the work of the brass bands today, given that the Rātana Church, community and political movement are well-established. It also suggests that the biblical resonances of the trumpet were not only relevant in the founding of the brass bands, but are a continued source of meaningfulness for the current bandmaster in relation to the bands and the spiritual work they perform today.

### **A Band or a Reo? The Spiritual and Physical in a Musical Context**

The dual naming of the brass bands relates to the coexisting spiritual and physical elements of a Rātana worldview or epistemology, and indicates the varied work required of the brass musicians, both historically and in the present day. Errol—former bandmaster of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, and currently playing euphonium in the band—gave an example of his band's physical and spiritual names being used in particular contexts today:

When we go down to church every Sunday, that's considered to be Te Reo O Te Ārepa going to do its mahi (work) in the Temepara. The Tumuaki of the Church sitting amongst us [band members] at one time, said 'It's simple, when those bells ring, you guys go'...But during Christmas period we go out and play carols, and that would be the Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band (Errol, 31/8/14).

When fundraising for a community project or charity event, or playing for entertainment, for example, the band uses its physical name. When playing in church, or on other clearly spiritual occasions, the group uses its spiritual name. These differing contexts demand different repertoire—adaptations of popular tunes played for entertainment, and hymns as part of the liturgy, for example—though there is also overlap in some areas (Tahu, 2/7/14). Although these particular performance contexts may seem to equate directly with 'sacred' and 'secular', there are other occasions on

which the distinction between physical and spiritual performance contexts seems less clear-cut, and they may also weave throughout a single event (as at the hui described in chapter four). While the spiritual physical dualism has obvious relevance in terms of the band names and performance contexts, William described how the two elements might also be thought of as commingling within the musical work of the early brass bands, used by TW Rātana as a ‘spearhead’ to combat tohunga and make way for the māramatanga:

There was an element of the physical and an element of the spiritual involved, because they were going to do God’s work against the Rēwera, the Devil. They would play the march Blaze Away... The musicians had to first of all know how to play the parts, so that was the physical side of it. But they also had to understand their job in fighting the evil that they were combatting, and that was the spiritual work of that band (William, 27/7/14).

William then compared the historic situation with the work of today’s brass bands:

Today it’s slightly different, because we’re not expected to go and beat up all these tohunga, because that job has been completed. But at the same time we are expected to play at whakamoemiti, at our services, so that’s the spiritual work. We’re also expected to do the repertoire to do entertainment stuff, so that’s the physical work (William, 27/7/14).

The brass bands’ spiritual names seem significant beyond simply commemorating an historic figure, and the word ‘Reo’ is important here. ‘Reo’ has a number of translations in English, including ‘language’, ‘voice’, ‘tongue’, ‘dialect’ and ‘speech.’ The Māori language is commonly referred to as ‘te reo Māori’ and as a result ‘language’ is likely to be the most widely understood English translation of ‘reo’ by non-speakers of te reo Māori in New Zealand.<sup>49</sup> In the Rātana brass context, ‘reo’ translates as ‘voice’, and so the bands of brass instruments might be considered metaphorical voices—for the aspects of Rātana cosmology and history and the members of the Rātana family that they represent.<sup>50</sup> Gordon—former drum major of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, now playing cornet in the band—emphasised there is a difference between a ‘band’ and a ‘Reo’: “Like Kaikohe...they had a *band*, not a

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, entries for ‘Te Reo’ and ‘reo’ in The Dictionary of New Zealand English (Orsman 1997, 826).

<sup>50</sup> Hebert states “Rātana considered brass bands to be his primary voice, so they came to be referred to in the religion as Reo” (2008, 14), however I did not encounter this idea during my research. There may be other interesting avenues to explore in relation to divinity taking the form of voice on Earth in a Māori context, for example Charles Royal explains “the immanent Io presence in the world takes the form of *reo*, a ‘voice’” (2003, xiv).

*Reo*” (Gordon, 2/9/14), until 1936, when that band was given its spiritual name. The distinction made here, as I understand it, implies that being named as a *Reo* is important in the confirmation of a band’s mandate to carry out spiritual work, such as playing for church services. Prior to its spiritual name being conferred, a band is simply a ‘band’, not a *Reo*. Different names are used for the same group of people wearing the same uniforms, playing the same instruments and even some of the same repertoire when performing in contrasting physical or spiritual contexts. This is perhaps indicative of both the sacred nature of the band’s work when playing in a spiritual context, and the weight and significance of the spiritual name itself. From a player’s perspective, the idea of voice is inherently linked with breath:

Gordon: It’s like we’re the voice, but not so much the voice, it’s the *hā*, or the breath. For us as members, when we blow into the instrument it’s creating that *hā*, that breath (Gordon, 2/9/14).

Tahu: Just like the first breath that God gave to Adam, that same breath is used to play our instruments. It’s a pure sustenance of God that was gifted to mankind. If we look at that instrument right now, it’s dead. But once we breathe through it, then we bring life. And once the breath is harnessed in a way that we can control it and make sweet tones from it, then it will uplift anybody who is in need of it (Tahu, 27/9/14).

### **Ārepa the Elder Sibling and Ngā Reo the Brass Band Family**

Each of the seven *Reo* is named for a different member or members of the *Rātana* family, some of whom themselves represent aspects of the movement’s or founder’s work, making for a layered symbolism.<sup>51</sup> Here, I explore aspects of symbolism and representation in just one band’s spiritual name, although each band has its own layers of association. *Te Reo O Te Ārepa*’s namesake is *Te Ārepa Rātana*,<sup>52</sup> the eldest son of *Te Urumanao* and *TW Rātana*. Born on October 14th 1910, he was named Tommy and was later given the name *Te Ārepa* (The Alpha) by his grandfather, who foresaw the spiritual significance of both Tommy and his brother, named *Te Ōmeka* (The Omega) (Newman 2009, 27-8; Anaru 1997a, 52-3). This dual naming, with a

<sup>51</sup> A further layer of symbolism is found in the *Reos*’ coloured blazers, each relating to a colour or combination of colours in the *whetū marama tohu* representing different parts of *Rātana* cosmology, as depicted in figure 9, chapter one. See also appendix two: table of band names and blazer colours.

<sup>52</sup> Also referred to as *Te Ārepa TW Rātana*, *Te Ārepa Tokouru Haami Rātana* (Anaru 1997a) and *Te Ārepa ‘Te Timatanga’ Rātana* (The Alpha ‘The Beginning’ *Rātana*) (Newman 2009, 27).

spiritual name being conferred after a ‘physical’ name, offers a parallel to the naming of the brass bands.<sup>53</sup>

Te Ārepa Rātana was one of few people to bear witness to TW Rātana’s divine visions and ‘time of testing’ in 1918, and to much of his spiritual and healing work (Anaru 1997d, 17; Newman 2009, 35). As Errol explained, Ārepa was sometimes called upon to advise his father in his spiritual mission:

Ārepa was certainly the spiritual element, and Ōmeka was the physical element. Rātana would from time to time speak to them and ask their advice, and they’d give him the answers he was looking for. A twelve or thirteen year old giving his dad some advice...they were very special children (Errol, 31/8/14).

As the Temepara bells tolled in the New Year on January 1st 1932 at Rātana Pā, Te Ārepa passed away aged twenty-one. Like his brothers Te Ōmeka and Hāmuera, who also died tragically young, Ārepa became a saintly figure or mediator in the Church after his death (Henderson 1972, 78). He is considered the “price paid” for the fulfilment of TW Rātana’s spiritual work of “closing of the door on the old and evil beliefs and practices, to be re-opened on a new faith and enlightenment” (Anaru 1997d, 18), and has come to represent the spiritual works of the founder and the spiritual side of the movement in broader terms.<sup>54</sup> Tahu explained the biblical association of the name ‘Ārepa’ in the band’s spiritual name:

Our spiritual name is Te Reo O Te Ārepa, which means The Voice of Alpha. And we only need to look into the Bible and ask ‘where does Alpha come from?’ It was back in the time of Jesus, when he said ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.’ So for us, Te Ārepa is the beginning...that’s our spiritual name, Te Reo O Te Ārepa (Tahu, 2/7/14).

Te Reo O Te Ārepa, then, is named for Te Ārepa Rātana, who himself is named from the Bible, and who represents the spiritual works of TW Rātana and of the movement more widely. The photograph in figure 4 shows members of the 1924 world tour boys’ band, including Te Ārepa Rātana.

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<sup>53</sup> Dual naming is not limited to the brass bands or to Rātana’s sons. Other members of the Rātana family had two names, for example Te Urumanao was also called Te Whaea o te Katoa. Rātana Pā is also called Ārepa Pā. And, as noted, Rātana himself had multiple names: Piri Wiri Tua, Te Māngai, and William or Bill Rātana. He is also referred to affectionately in the Mōrehu community as ‘The Dad’ (pers. comm. Arahi Hagger).

<sup>54</sup> Ārepa’s brothers Ōmeka and Hāmuera are considered the “price paid for the Ture Tangata (physical works) of the māramatanga”, and the “price paid for the work of destroying tohungaism” respectively (Anaru 1997d, 18).



Figure 4 Members of the world tour boys' band, 1924.  
Te Ārepa middle row, far right. (Rātana Community Archives).

### The Family of Bands and the Band as Family

Given that each of the seven Reo is named for a member or members of the Rātana family, the bands themselves might be thought of as a symbolic musical family. The ways in which the bands are talked about, and the ways in which they function as a collective, support this idea. In conversations and interviews, band members relayed the order of the seven bands in a manner similar to the recitation of whakapapa (genealogy) in which correct order is essential (Mead 2003), apologising in the event of a sequential error and starting again from the beginning.<sup>55</sup> As the oldest band, Te Reo O Te Ārepa has a particular status. Members of Te Reo O Te Ārepa described their band as the tuakana (elder sibling), and felt they should be able to lead by example for the younger sibling bands by maintaining high standards of musicianship and deportment in performance. This status also has bearing on the organisational structure of the collective, and the way the massed band functions in performance: the bandmaster of Te Reo O Te Ārepa is also the bandmaster of the seven-band collective; and Ārepa band's drum major typically retains this position when the massed band performs. In these ways, being the eldest band or tuakana appears to carry with it the status accorded elder siblings in Māori families, as perhaps in Pākehā

<sup>55</sup> Whakapapa (noun) is often translated as 'genealogy', and as a verb translates as 'to recite *in proper order*' (Moorfield 2011). Mead indicates the importance of whakapapa: "In short, whakapapa is belonging" (2003, 42-3). The order of the bands' whakapapa follows the chronological order of their establishment, with the exception of Te Reo O Te Ōmeka which was established third but comes second in the naming order (see appendix two: table of band names and blazer colours).

families also: a position of authority coupled with the responsibility to mentor and support younger siblings (Mead 2003, 42).

While there is a symbolic family relationship between the seven band units, family is also significant in other ways. Interviewees frequently described their band unit and the collective of bands, Ngā Reo, as being like a family, “a band of brothers and sisters just there for the same thing” (Kama, 2/9/14). Familial sentiment is not unusual in banding culture,<sup>56</sup> and this supports the idea that bands not only serve and bring together those who share the locality in which they perform, but also that “the process of musicking [can constitute] community for the musicians themselves” (Brucher & Reily 2013, 23)—the band itself as a musical community. ‘Physical’ kinship lineages also run through Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band. Of the small community at Rātana Pā, William noted “there aren’t many houses here...that never had anybody who joined [Ārepa] band” (William, 27/7/14). Most I spoke with in the community have had family members in at least one of the brass bands at some point in time. Some current members of Ārepa band are second or third generation members, and this aspect of whakapapa is certainly meaningful:

Those sorts of connections were important when we were growing up, because if we took on the commitment to join the band, people wouldn’t be looking at us thinking ‘there’s William, he’s in the band.’ They’d be thinking ‘that’s the mokopuna (grandchild) of so and so’, they’d be looking at Tahu and saying ‘his grandfather was in the brass band’ (William, 27/7/14).

Even within the small group of current members of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band interviewed in this research there are familial links. Errol is Gordon’s uncle, and Tahu’s father is also in the band. Kama—currently playing tenor horn in the band—noted she was the first of her family to have been in the brass bands, “apart from five cousins”. Her daughter Sadé is also currently in the band. Mary—the first female member of RMSB, who spent more than forty years playing repiano cornet in the band, and has now retired—spoke about her family involvement in the brass bands, the extent of which seemed impressive to me though is apparently not unusual: “my dad and his two brothers, and cousins, and my two daughters” were all in the Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, and “my son is in the band up in Kaikohe and my moko (grandson) was in that band, too” (Mary, 13/9/14).

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<sup>56</sup> For further discussion of ‘family-like’ sentiment in contemporary brass bands, see Finnegan (2007, 47-57) and Bruinders (2012, 40).

The idea of family, or *whānau*, can act as a bridge between the aspects of symbolism and the lived experiences of band membership discussed in this chapter, and can also contribute to an understanding of the brass bands within the Rātana Mōrehu community. Kay Shelemay suggests comparing insider notions of community with scholarly concepts as a means of closing the gap between local concepts and academic discourse, thereby adding nuance to understandings of ‘community’ (2011, 376). *Whānau* might be considered an insider notion of community and band in the Rātana context. The term ‘*whānau*’ is generally translated as ‘extended kinship group’ (Moorfield 2011). However, as New Zealand readers will be aware, this term also has a much broader range of meanings and uses, and is commonly used in a metaphorical sense, intended to be inclusive and to emphasise relationship between members of a group regardless of whether kinship ties exist (Metge 1990, 73). The use of ‘*whānau*’ and ‘family’ by band members to describe RMSB and the wider band collective emphasises the close relationships generated by collective music making, and draws attention to the bands as a type of musical community. Interviewees also described their community at Rātana Pā as being ‘like a *whānau*’, indicating the close-knit nature of the small township, and perhaps also alluding to the lineages of membership that tie many households at the Pā to the local brass band.

Bound up with Rātana notions of community is the ideal of *kotahitanga*, or pan-tribal Māori unity under God.<sup>57</sup> Āpotoro and former member of Te Reo O Te Ārepa Ruia Aperahama articulated a link between the brass bands and *kotahitanga*, describing each band as representative of different tribes and areas of the country from which people came together to form the Mōrehu community:

All these brass bands [are] reflective of tribal regions that came together. We grew up with a common element with each other. Even if somebody came from Hāmura [band] in the Tai Rāwhiti, and all the Tai Rāwhiti tribes, for example, we knew that we had a common link. E te Māngai, ngā Anahera Pono...and you hear everybody from all the different tribes all singing the same hymn, the same waiata, the same prayer together...Or playing the same march, from all the different tribes (Ruia, 19/9/14).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Note that there are multiple uses of the term *kotahitanga* and although the majority of Rātana followers are Māori, *kotahitanga* is not always considered to be exclusively Māori unity. Implicit in the Rātana concept of *kotahitanga* is shared faith in the *māramatanga*. Newman states that “anyone, regardless of race, creed or religion, can consider themselves Mōrehu if they choose to believe that Rātana was called by God for his mission to the nation on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1918” (2006, 472).

<sup>58</sup> Te Tai Rāwhiti (The East Side), a Māori electorate created in 1996, now part of Waiariki and Ikaroa-Rāwhiti electorates (Source: Electoral Commission of New Zealand).

Ruia encapsulates some of the ways in which band music, like prayer, serves as a common, cohering element, not just for the musicians in the brass bands but for others in the Mōrehu community also. Participatory waiata and hymn singing and playing, and the less directly participatory but still collective musical experience of the bands' marches, are identified here as musical processes that create social bonds, reaffirming links between Mōrehu from all over the country (Shelemay 2011; Turino 1993, 2008). In these ways, the brass bands actively bind members of the Mōrehu community together, generating a sense of identity and providing common experience through music and performance. 'Whānau' and 'kotahitanga' emphasise the importance of togetherness and shared faith in the Rātana Mōrehu community, and the brass bands were directly associated with these notions by many of those I spoke with. An analogy of iwi-hapū-whānau for the Rātana brass bands seems fitting, with the individual band units as musical whānau (extended family groups), and the seven-band collective as a musical hapū (sub-tribe), within Te Iwi Mōrehu.<sup>59</sup> This analogy, coupled with Rātana notions of community and banding outlined briefly above, may be helpful in conceptualising the relationship between the different Reo and in understanding the significance of brass bands in this particular community context.

Up until this point in the chapter, I have largely focused on the symbolic aspects of the brass bands: the bands as metaphorical voices, having layered associations with Rātana cosmology, family members, and the spiritual and physical works of the movement; the bands as spearhead; the bands as symbolic family, and as representing tribal regions from which the Mōrehu community came together. Such layers of meaning and representation in this band tradition are perhaps unsurprising, given that the use of symbols is so prevalent in the Rātana Church and, as Newman notes, it appears there is "a reason and meaning for everything" (2006, 194). But these "layers of locally generated meaning" (Booth 2005, 9) of the brass band in a Rātana context are not immediately obvious to the outsider's eye or ear. In terms of instrumentation, repertoire, dress and marching style, the Rātana brass bands do not differ greatly from many other New Zealand brass bands. These familiar aspects of practice do not point to the specifically Rātana meanings with which the bands are invested. As an outsider

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<sup>59</sup> Iwi commonly refers to "a large group of people descended from a common ancestor" (Moorfield 2011, 47-8). Te Iwi Mōrehu shares a spiritual ancestry (Tahu, 27/9/14; Anaru 1997c, 10).



to this community, learning about the layered significances of the bands and their spiritual names has required a great deal of research and discussion. Knowing a little of these meanings may help to understand the power of the brass musicians in action, as explored in chapters three and four. However, symbolic meanings are not the only key to *meaningfulness* on a personal level. The musicians I worked with find their membership meaningful in multiple ways, as I hope the following section will illustrate.

## **Sparkling Instruments, Smart Uniforms, and Getting Outside the Pā: Membership of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band**

I was about six or seven, and Te Rauna Taiaroa was the bandmaster of the time. His mokopuna went around the whole Pā asking my age group if we wanted to join the brass band...Me and my twin brother, we'd grown up watching the brass bands and going 'wow!' Just seeing this organised movement of people going in the one direction—all these people, one movement, one motion, playing the tunes, the colours [of the blazers] and the sparkle on the instruments. Those were all things that drew us to it. So we said 'yeah, we'll join the brass band' (Ruia, 19/9/14).

Based on personal stories of joining and learning, Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band is considered a socially uplifting organisation at Rātana Pā. Band membership is as a way of involving young people in the community and Church, teaching them musical skills and encouraging the development of self-discipline and commitment. In a small community such as the one at Rātana Pā, one might expect a relaxed attitude to joining or dropping in on community groups like the brass band. However, joining the Reo is regarded as a serious undertaking, often involving a meeting between bandmaster, new recruit and parents or grandparents to discuss the level of commitment expected. Children are generally recruited into the junior ranks at a young age (most I spoke with joined between the ages of seven and eleven), and family links within the band are often influential. “As a young kid about the age of three, I picked up my first cornet. It was just through family ties. My father played in the Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, I had uncles in there as well and I kind of followed suit” (Tahu, 2/7/14). The chance to travel and see other parts of the country was a major attraction to joining the band, up until the fairly recent past when there were fewer opportunities for young people to be involved in extra-curricular and leisure

activities outside the Pā. Some members volunteered readily as young children, being impressed by the professionalism of the senior players with their smart uniforms, unified movements, and shining instruments, and recalling the band's popularity during their childhood when “most children were in it, there were more in rather than out” (Errol, 31/8/14). Others, like Gordon, had little or no say in joining the Reo: “My mum said ‘you’re going to be in the band and that’s it!’ ” (Gordon, 2/9/14). Kama’s daughter Sadé, now thirteen years old and the youngest member of the senior band, first joined the junior ranks aged seven. Kama saw joining the band as an opportunity for her daughter to learn musical skills and develop the ability to commit:

I just wanted her to join...I wanted her to learn how to read music. She wanted to join the choir...but I wanted her to be exposed to what you go through being in the band. The commitment that you need to make is like the foundation for anything you do in your life (Kama, 2/9/14).



Figure 5 Gordon Ririnui playing drum at a hui in 1991. (Photograph by Ans Westra. Reproduced with permission).



Figure 6 Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, 1985. Tahu Pikimaui, back row, far left. Gordon Ririnui, back row, third from left. Errol Mason, centre row, third from left. (Rātana Community Archives).

For Te Reo O Te Ārepa to fulfil its roles in the community and Church requires a great deal of hard work and commitment on the part of its members: learning to read music, mastering one's instrument in self-practice and rehearsals, playing for services at the Pā and events away from home. Kama, who lives in Whanganui with her husband and children, defined the commitment involved in being a member of the Reo, and the challenges of upholding this ideal:

The commitment involved in joining the Reo is you've got to be there—at church, practice, whenever Tahu says we're going, we go. Even now it's hard for me to make that sort of commitment, when my husband works rotating shifts. If my mum can't come and get me that means we don't go to church, or we don't go wherever [the Reo members] have got to go. So it's still hard (Kama, 2/9/14).

Band members—senior members in particular—recounted stories of the strict disciplinarians who tutored and led them in their early years in the band. William recalled his first tutor, Koro Alf (Alfred Williams), a stern teacher but someone he credits with sparking his lifelong passion for brass playing and for music in general:

He was a very hard man. If you didn't go home and do your studies...it showed up the next time you turned up, so you couldn't lie your way through it. He had a habit of whacking your ears with whatever was in his hand. If you were lucky it was a drumstick...if you were very unlucky, it was a screwdriver (William, 27/7/14).

Others told similar stories, considering this type of discipline to be “part and parcel” of how children were brought up at that time, and expressing deep respect and fondness for their kaiako (tutors) and bandmasters. The development of discipline is cited by some as a main attraction to the band. On formal occasions on the marae, band members frequently stand in formation for the duration of whaikōrero (formal speech-making) regardless of weather conditions and sometimes for long periods at a stretch, demanding a high level of physical and mental self-discipline, as Gordon explained:

These days on the marae they're quite quick. When I first joined in the 1980s, the band would usually stand out there for quite a few hours... You had the big orators of that time, they would stand on the marae and just let it rip! And we would just be expected to stand there... But they've always been known for that, the band members. I think the biggest attraction to the band is probably the discipline (Gordon, 2/9/14).

Training processes in Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band place emphasis on developing musical literacy. Reading music is regarded as highly important, no doubt in part due to the large repertoire of hymns and marches that the bandmaster may ideally draw from. Members recount similar stories of spending the first six months in the junior ranks studying theory and learning to read music before even touching a brass instrument, which seems unusual in the context of an amateur music group. An anecdote from Errol demonstrates how, at one point in time, Rātana brass players' advanced music reading abilities helped to counter stereotypes of Māori musicians as 'natural' musicians, but musically illiterate ear-players:

To quote a brother of mine, 'You put fly shit on that wall, we'll read it off that wall', you put anything up in front of us and we'll just read it... When I got a bit older and started getting involved in dance bands and big bands, the amount of people we would come across, if we'd say 'have you got scores for that?' They'd say 'Oh, you can read?... Māori guys who actually read? You guys don't play by ear?' (Errol, 31/8/14).

The ability to read music is one of the skills members appear to value most highly having gained from their membership, allowing them to meet the demands of playing in the Reo, and a transferable skill facilitating musical engagement in other amateur, and professional, contexts.<sup>60</sup> Musical training for members of RMSB has sometimes been augmented by joining the Whanganui Garrison Band (now Brass Whanganui), a move encouraged by bandmasters and tutors, and sometimes resulting in long-term membership.<sup>61</sup> For some, including Tahu and Ruia, musical training begun in the Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band has led on to professional careers in music: Tahu as a trumpet and cornet player; and Ruia as a nationally recognised singer and songwriter in te reo Māori. Both cite their training in the Reo as a musical foundation. In these ways, membership of the Reo might be considered in a broader context of 'pathways' of musical engagement (Finnegan 2007).

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<sup>60</sup> Katherine Brucher notes "wind bands have long been musical training grounds that... in some cases, provide an important stepping stone to becoming a professional musician", (2013, 156). Bendrups & Hoddinott emphasise the importance of brass bands as training grounds for aspiring musicians in New Zealand (2007, 74).

<sup>61</sup> Tahu and William are both current members of Brass Whanganui.

## **Taking Part and Giving Back**

Te Reo O Te Ārepa plays an integral role in church services at the Pā and, seated at the front of the Temepara near the apostles, the brass players are in a position of regularly hearing the sermon.

Gordon: You're in the front, you're always there and you always hear everything. Back in Tauranga they say, 'the best people to suss out how good your kauhau (sermon) is, are these fellas over here [the band]. Because we sit there and we listen to it every time (Gordon, 2/9/14).

In conversations and interviews, the musicians talked about the need to uplift and inspire through their playing. They also described their membership in the band as a way of taking part in the Church, and a way of giving back to the community. Some talked about the many years of being in the band—mastering the 'musical fundamentals', standing for hours on the marae, playing for services, and traveling out of the Pā—during which they came to realise the depth of the spiritual side of the band's work.

I didn't really have an appreciation of the spiritual-ness of it until many years into it, and when I say many, I mean very many. Then I realised, there is a spiritual element to the band. As you get older you have an appreciation of that... for me, it's an area that I feel comfortable taking part, as a musician rather than as someone standing up at the pulpit giving the sermon (Errol, 31/8/14).

Gordon recalled that in his early years in the band, the spiritual significance of the Reo and the reasons for particular practices were not often articulated by band masters and senior band members. Rather, as a young band member, he was expected to fulfil his commitment to being in the Reo without question.

You just played and that was it. Younger people coming in, they have a lot of questions. [Senior members] would sit there and look at you, 'Because that's what it is. Don't ask why, you just *do*! Just get in there and play your instrument!' And we did. I kept on asking, but in the end you basically have to discover it for yourself (Gordon, 2/9/14).

The above quote suggests an emphasis on learning through musical participation, and supports the idea that the brass band, or Reo, is seen as a socially and spiritually uplifting organisation in the community.

Rātana Pā is a small community that appears to highly value, and in a sense depend upon, the participation of its individual members in community groups, administrative

bodies, and chapters of the Church—a premise of individual contribution for the greater good, for which basis might be found both in the New Testament and in Māori cultural values (Mathiesen 2006, 74). Becoming a band member seems to be *one* way of being involved, even expected in some families. There are of course other ways of being active in the community: Newman cites fifteen sporting, cultural and social organisations at Rātana Pā (2006, 472), and interviewees frequently reminded me that music is ‘just one part of the picture’. However the brass players do seem to occupy a special position, given that their musical activities span playing for church services, undertaking community outreach activities such as goodwill visits to the sick and ailing, and fulfilling formal roles on the marae at the Pā, as well as playing for fundraising and entertainment. Put differently, the brass musicians are musical multi-taskers whose work encompasses performance for differing purposes in spiritual, and ‘physical’ (which might be teased out here into social and political), spheres.

Brass band membership has been framed in a number of ways in the literature, and multiple interpretations are possible here, particularly when taking into account the many aspects of being in the band that band members find meaningful.<sup>62</sup> Frequently, the musicians I spoke with described their membership as a way of ‘being involved’ in the Church, and ‘giving back’ to the community and to the band itself. I suggest band membership in the Rātana Pā context can be considered an expression of commitment—to the community, to the musical collectivity of the band, and to the māramatanga that underpins both band and community. Being in the band might also be thought of as part of a process of spiritual growth. What begins as a family obligation or the chance to hang out with peers and travel outside the Pā leads, through participation in the band, to increased spiritual understanding and, as some articulate, becomes a personal form of worship.

## Summary

This chapter has introduced the seven Rātana brass bands and has focused on Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, also called Te Reo O Te Ārepa, the elder sibling of the band ‘family’. As metaphorical voices, the brass bands have layered associations with

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<sup>62</sup> Sylvia Bruinders interprets membership in Christmas bands in South Africa as an enactment of citizenship (2012). Katherine Brucher describes how, in a Portuguese wind band context, membership of a local band “symbolises one’s integration into the community” (Brucher 2013, 171).

Rātana cosmology, history and the Rātana family, which I have explored in this chapter by discussing the spiritual band name Te Reo O Te Ārepa. The seven bands also represent different regions from which the Rātana Mōrehu community came together. These aspects of symbolism and representation are locally generated meanings of the brass band in the Rātana context that are not immediately obvious to the outside observer, and are important in understanding different facets of the bands in performance, as discussed in the following chapters.

The coexisting spiritual and physical elements of a Rātana worldview find particular expression in the brass bands, most obviously in terms of naming and performance contexts. These elements also commingle in the band members' musical work. 'Whānau' as a local notion of community and banding draws together the idea of a symbolic band family with the familial sentiment and kinship links at work in the Rātana brass band context, and suggests the close social relationships generated by collective music-making. The brass bands are implicated in the ideal of kotahitanga, unity, indicating their role in generating and sustaining connections amongst members of the wider Mōrehu community also.

Band members' reflections on joining, learning and playing in Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band have helped to locate the band within its community context at Rātana Pā, and have illustrated some of the many aspects of membership that the musicians find meaningful. Being a member of the brass band allows for the development of musical skill, and qualities of self-discipline and commitment. Some also describe their membership as part of a process of spiritual development, and as a personal form of worship. Band membership in the Rātana Pā context is one way of being involved in the community and Church, and might be considered an expression of commitment—to the community, band and māramatanga.





# Chapter Three

## ‘Soldiers of the Church’: Marching to Church and Marae

The sound of trumpets can be heard almost daily at Rātana Pā, where Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band plays at regular Sunday morning church services, at life-cycle celebrations such as weddings and baptisms, and at other times when service is held. The band’s members also travel out of the Pā to play at the opening of new churches in their region, to raise funds for charity or community projects, and to make goodwill visits to the sick and ailing.<sup>63</sup> On significant dates in the Rātana calendar like TW Rātana’s birthday on January 25<sup>th</sup>, members from each of the seven bands gather at the Pā. And when the Church leaders make official visits, brass musicians generally accompany them. These examples of band performance contexts might be grouped together in a number of ways: as regular and special events; playing within and outside of the Pā; as spiritual or physical work; as Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band on its own or within the band collective, Ngā Reo. The musicians are frequently on the march, both at the Pā and when making trips out. The name of a well-known hymn—Soldiers of the Church, Hoia o te Hāhi—serves as the title to this chapter. I take this title as an entry point into exploring the brass band in church and marae contexts—two important sites of communal gathering, where brass music and marching play an integral role.

In this chapter, I aim to create a picture of the brass band members in action in the community, illustrating aspects of their varied musical work. I describe and discuss two main performance events, exploring some of the distinctive, local functions of the brass band in a Rātana setting. I begin with the events of a regular Sunday morning at Rātana Pā, when Te Reo O Te Ārepa marches to Temple and plays for church service. I then describe members of Ngā Reo playing at the King Movement’s annual

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<sup>63</sup> “Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band’s region goes up to New Plymouth, up to Te Kuiti, down to Levin, and over to the Ruahine Ranges” (William, 27/7/14).

coronation celebrations at Tūrangawaewae marae, where the band acts as the ‘spearhead’ of the Rātana movement. In the discussions below, I expand on the theme of music and space-making, considering ways in which the brass band constructs or transforms spaces for the Mōrehu through performance—both at home at the Pā, and when ‘going out’. Using the example of the visit to Tūrangawaewae, I also investigate the band members’ role in the pōwhiri (welcome ceremony) on the marae.

The narrative passages in this chapter have been developed from my field notes. In these sections, I aim to give a sense of the physical locations and social settings in which the band members played, and of my own experiences of the music and surrounding events.

## **Sunday Mornings at Rātana Pā: Te Reo O Te Ārepa Marching to Temepara and Playing for Church Service**

*Every Sunday at 10:30am, the first bells begin to ring out from the Temepara towers, their close-harmony and phasing rhythm announcing to the Mōrehu at Rātana Pā that whakamoemiti will soon begin. At 10:45am the second bell-ringing calls on the presence of Ihoa and the Faithful Angels for church service. Also at this signal, members of Te Reo O Te Ārepa, dressed in uniform with blue blazers and caps, assemble outside the Manuao to begin the march to the Temepara. At the command of “Hīkoi, Tere!” (Quick March!) the band begins playing Rātana March and moves down Wharekauri Street along the front of the Manuao, picking up any āpotoro or āwhina wanting to march with the band to church and carrying on past the marae. Left turn onto Taihauāuru Street, brass and drums mingle with clanging bells and resound throughout the Pā. Right turn onto Waipounamu Street to arrive outside the Temepara grounds. Here the band splits in two and, continuing to play, flanks the Temepara gateway for those waiting to enter through the music, into the Temepara grounds, past the tomb of TW Rātana and into Te Temepara Tapu o Ihoa.<sup>64</sup> (CD Tracks 2 & 3).*

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<sup>64</sup> Āpotoro (apostle), āwhina (Sister of Mercy) (Anaru 1997d).

Marching to and from Temepara and playing in church services on Sunday mornings are central aspects of Te Reo O Te Ārepa's musical work, and are considered to be the band's main mahi (Errol, 31/8/14). The brass instruments are easily audible from around the small, flat settlement of close to eight acres, and calling the community in to worship is perhaps the most obvious function of the band's march to any outsider visiting the Pā. However the march is not simply a call to prayer, as Tahu explained:

It is an announcement, yes, but we also have two bells...and [one] calls upon the people. The reason for the marching—and once again this is my take on it—is that it's biblical. In the time of the Levites they had a marching order. They'd hear the first bell, which would call upon the armies of the left, and the second bell would call upon the armies of the right. Everywhere they went, they marched ahead of the Ark of the Covenant to clear the way. So we use that here as well (Tahu, 27/9/14).

The band begins its march from outside the band room, which sits on the northern side of the Manuao, its walls adorned with photos of past manifestations of the band. The Manuao was conceived of as a ship and has also been referred to as 'Te Āka' and 'Rātana's Ark' (Newman 2006). Tahu draws a parallel between the Levites marching ahead of the Ark of the Covenant and Te Reo O Te Ārepa marching ahead of the Manuao, or Rātana's Ark, seen as a container for his treasures (the Mōrehu) and teachings (ibid.). Many communal events take place in the Manuao and community groups including the Church Committee and kapa haka group meet or practise there. It is significant that the band not only begins its march from the Manuao but ends there also, marching back after church service. In this way, Te Reo O Te Ārepa's march symbolically and sonically connects the two most significant communal buildings at the Pā, a linkage that Tahu likens to the links of the chains painted inside the Temepara connecting the names of Matua, Tama, Wairua Tapu, Anahera Pono, and Māngai.<sup>65</sup> "It's more or less just linking everything to the rock...and I would probably say bringing the blessings back again, from what we've gained at church" (Tahu, 2/7/14). Perhaps by doing so the band helps to keep the Manuao and the work that goes on inside it invested with the spiritual. Some current members of Ārepa band, including Errol, formed part of the performance troupe that toured the country in the late 1970s to raise funds for the refurbishment of the Manuao. As well as helping to maintain a spiritual connection between the Manuao and Temepara, then,

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<sup>65</sup> Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Faithful Angels, Mouthpiece (Anaru 1997d).

the band members have also been involved in the physical work of fundraising to ensure the preservation of this important communal building.



**Figure 1** The Manuao at Rātana Pā. Illuminated portraits of TW Rātana, Te Urumanao and their sons Ārepa and Ōmeka adorn the Manuao frontage. Underneath sit five miniature waka and two European ships, in which Māori, and later Pākehā, travelled to New Zealand. (Rātana Community Archives).

### **Making Space for the Community**

The origins and purpose of marching to Temepara were described to me in a variety of ways: as ‘purely biblical’; as ‘calling people to church’; and as ‘just what we do here’, maintaining an Ārepa band tradition. In the literature, band processions have been discussed in terms of their potential to construct and lay claim to spaces and places,<sup>66</sup> and Ārepa’s march might also be considered a kind of “spatializing performance” (Brucher & Reily 2013, 19). Scholars have described band processions as a means by which people appropriate public spaces, in noisy confrontation with hegemonic sectors of society and other groups with conflicting claims to space.<sup>67</sup> Rātana Pā is an interesting setting in which to consider the transformation of space through musical performance, offering an example that differs from many of those presented in the literature. The Pā is not the kind of ‘contested public space’ to which subaltern groups might lay claim through public procession, as described in several recent ethnographies of brass and wind bands (Sakakeeny 2010; Bruinders 2013; Brucher & Reily 2013). Given its removed geographic location, and the absence of

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Brucher & Reily (2013, 18-19), Sakakeeny (2010) and Booth (2005).

<sup>67</sup> See Bruinders (2012, 50), Bruinders (2013, 146-7) and Sakakeeny (2010).

local government presence and commercial businesses (except for two locally-owned grocery stores), the Pā community is not directly confronted with commercial interests and institutions of governance to the same extent as many towns and cities in New Zealand. Community members are followers of the Church, and much of the day-to-day running of the Pā is handled by the Church Committee and other community-based committees, meaning a degree of autonomy in administration (Newman 2006, 470-2). Michel de Certeau defines place as stable, constituted by structures situated in relationship to one another in a particular location. However, space, De Certeau contends, is “actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it” (1984, 117)—that is, transformed through the ways in which it is used. Based on these definitions, the Pā is a spiritual place *and* space—by nature of the biblical symbolism of its communal structures, the history of its establishment, and the spiritual or faith-based community living there. On Sundays, Ārepa’s march might be thought of as a ritual performance that heightens the spiritual, divine space of the Pā, sanctifying the streets and ‘clearing the way’ in preparation for whakamoemiti in the Temepara. At this moment, space is conspicuously transformed through music-making and performance. But with spirituality talked of as part of ‘everything that we do’, the Pā is perhaps continually being renewed as a spiritual space through the everyday activity and frequent worship that takes place within it.



Figure 2 Map showing Te Reo O Te Ārepa's route from Manuao to Temepara. (Source: Scribble Maps).

### **‘That’s Te Reo O Te Ārepa Doing Its Mahi’: Playing for Sunday Morning Church Service**

As people pass through the Temepara gateway, flanked on either side by the band still playing,

it’s like going through a carwash, [you] get that real cleansing. It’s like when you’ve been out playing in the mud and your mum tells you to go and clean yourself off before you come into the house. Same thing if you go into the house of the Lord, you have to cleanse yourself (Tahu, 2/7/14).

While entering through the musical gateway of Reo members may be the ideal sequence of events, things do not always turn out this way. One blustery, wet Sunday morning, I stood with a small group on the Temepara steps. Most people were inside the Temple out of the rain and wind before the second bell-ringing began. As the band marched around the corner onto Taihauāuru Street, gusts of wind whipped its sound loudly towards us one moment, muting the brass to our ears the next and sending cornet and euphonium tones out to the cows in the back paddocks instead. An āwhina marching with the band struggled with her umbrella, using it more like a shield than a shelter. But the band will march, whatever the weather.



Figure 3 Above left, the Temepara at Rātana Pā on a calm, sunny day. (Rātana Community Archives).

Figure 4 Above right, the Temepara and the Hallelujah Gateway. (Photograph by Molly Marshall).

Inside the Temepara, hanging pot plants and hand-painted whetū marama tohu adorn the walls. Band members file in from a side door and take up position in the tiered pews facing the congregation and Koaea. Sunday morning whakamoemiti follows the order of service set by orthodox churches, and includes hymn singing, reading from the scriptures, prayer and sermon (Newman 2006, 472). At a regular Sunday service, the Reo plays two hymns. The opening hymn, which may be different each week, is

generally played by the band alone. Gordon described the brass players' role in church service as being similar to that of the āpotoro giving the sermon:

If anything, our role is just like theirs: 'inspire me'. We've got to try and play inspiring. Let's try and get that intonation right, get that energy, so we can portray that energy in what we're playing about (Gordon, 2/9/14).

Following the sermon, the Koaea sings its hymn and readings from the scriptures are given. Te Reo O Te Ārepa then concludes the service with the closing hymn, Ma Te Marie.<sup>68</sup> This hymn is not specific to the Rātana Church, nor is its use as a doxology at the close of service. However the Rātana text has some particularities, and Henderson has described this hymn as "perhaps the best example (in brief) of Rātana theology" (1972, 75). In the Rātana version, the text is set to an adaptation of Old Hundredth by Louis Bourgeois, in which the melody and the harmonic structure of Old Hundredth is retained but the rhythm has been altered: crotchet beats have been lengthened to minims, meaning each note is played or sung with equal duration.<sup>69</sup> The Reo generally plays the first verse of this hymn alone, and is joined in subsequent verses by the Koaea and congregation.<sup>70</sup> Even with only a 'tight five' or 'core seven' present, the Reo's sound is large and resonant in the high-ceilinged wooden Temepara. At this point in the service, the brass 'voices' of the Reo and the voices of the Koaea and congregation join together in singing and playing Ma Te Marie, a point of musical interaction and worship during which, perhaps, "the very fact of many voices sounding together creates the experience of unity, directly and concretely felt" (Turino 2008, 217).

After service, the Reo members march back to the band room in the Manuao, playing Rātana March. Marching to Temepara and playing for whakamoemiti is acknowledged as Te Reo O Te Ārepa's main mahi. This is spiritual work, and an integral aspect of communal life and worship at the Pā. The band also has a number of other roles to play, both as an independent unit and as part of the larger whole, Ngā

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<sup>68</sup> 'May the Peace' (Anaru 1997a).

<sup>69</sup> The non-Rātana version of Ma Te Marie is sung in the Māori Methodist Church and in non-denominational Māori services (William, 27/7/14), and is set to at least one other hymn tune (see WH Tuerlings 2004, 71). I have been asked to represent the Rātana hymn with sensitivity, which is why the text, translation and notation are not given here.

<sup>70</sup> The sequence of events described here as 'regular Sunday service' is based on the occasions I attended Sunday morning whakamoemiti at Rātana Pā. On some occasions, members of the Koaea and congregation sang along with the Reo's first hymn. However the whole congregation joined in singing Ma Te Marie after the band's first solo verse.



Reo. In the following section I describe and discuss the massed band operating in a marae context, when the Rātana leadership visited the Māori King Movement at Tūrangawaewae marae.

## **The Spearhead Goes Out: Ngā Reo at Tūrangawaewae**

### **Marae**

When Rātana...go on to any marae, the Tumuaki never goes in front of the band. In fact, nobody goes in front of the band. The band is acknowledged as the spearhead of the movement, the protective cloak. Everything in behind the band.

—Jesse Pene Snr (in Wikiriwhi-Heta 2013).

When the Rātana Church leaders attend events in an official capacity they are accompanied by brass band members. The Rātana movement has a close relationship with Kīngitanga, the Māori King Movement based at Tūrangawaewae marae in Ngāruawāhia in the Waikato region of the North Island.<sup>71</sup> Kīngitanga was established in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the aim of uniting tribes under a Māori monarch as resistance to European ‘divide-and-rule’ strategies, and remains a strong and politically significant movement (King 2003, 211-212). After some initial difficulty in establishing a firm relationship, the ties between Rātana and Kīngitanga were forged in earnest in the 1970s by the leaders of each movement<sup>72</sup> (Newman 2006, 172-177, 202). Every year, Kīngitanga marks the coronation of its leader—currently Te Arikinui Kīngi Tuheitia Paki—with a week-long celebration, one of the largest regular hui in the country (Salmond 1996, 203). Rātana’s attendance at Koroneihana is important in maintaining links between the two movements, and the brass musicians have a significant part to play. ‘Going out’ is a phrase frequently used by members of RMSB to refer to trips to play outside of the band’s home ground at the Pā. In August 2014, I travelled with band members when they went out to Koroneihana, as described in the narrative extracts below.

<sup>71</sup> As mentioned, Kīngitanga has its own brass band that sometimes accompanies the King on his annual visits to loyal marae (Salmond 1996, 203) and to the Rātana 25<sup>th</sup> Hui. The Rātana and Kīngitanga bands are familiar with one another, and have at times played together (Maipi 2014).

<sup>72</sup> At that time: the Māori Queen, Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu; and Tumuaki of Te Hāhi Rātana, Maata ‘Te Reo’ Hura.



*At 11:30pm, in the dark and drizzle, members of Te Reo O Te Ārepa congregate on the street corner near the Temple, sheltering from the weather under the awning of a local dairy. They take up formation on the road and, playing Rātana March, move toward the Temepara gateway, then on into the Temepara. Still uncertain about how comfortable band members are with me being party to the spiritual aspects of their work, I stay outside, wondering how the brass instruments might sound in the quiet night to people in their houses, a signal that the Reo is heading out to work. After a few moments my thoughts are interrupted by the bandmaster coming back out to the street and yelling my name, “You can come in if you want!” Inside the Temple, Tahu says prayers on behalf of the group. “That’s our normal thing. We meet at the corner there, go into the Temple, ask for blessing for everyone’s safe travel along the way...and the same when we come back” (Tahu, 27/9/14). Driving through the dark and mist along the long, winding route between Whanganui and Ngāruawāhia, I chat with Kama—university student and mother of four who rejoined Te Reo O Te Ārepa seven years ago—while her daughter Sadé sleeps in the back seat. We arrive at Ngāruawāhia shortly before 5am, parking up near the marae, which sits on the banks of the Waikato River.*

*Members from each of the seven Reo congregate by the river, having travelled through the night to reach Ngāruawāhia from the Far North, Hawke’s Bay, Tauranga, Wellington, the South Island and Rātana Pā. Dressed in their band colours, the musicians filter out of vehicles in the half-light of the early morning, greeting one another. The Waikato runs quiet and glistening. Band members take up formation: red, green, yellow, purple coats, and three shades of blue with different trim merging into instrumental sections. At this point, Tahu says whakamoemiti, asking for blessings for the work they are about to perform, before the band marches quietly down the road and around the corner toward the marae entrance.*

It was on this trip that I first saw and heard Ngā Reo play live as a massed band, having previously watched videos on YouTube of the massed band at large hui, and dvds of the annual band conference lent to me by Tahu. For an event like Koroneihana

each of the seven bands sends a small number of members as representatives, and a total of around thirty-five band members were in attendance at Koroneihana in 2014. The colourful diversity of the musicians' blazers reminded me of what Ruia had said about the bands representing the different tribal regions from which the Mōrehu community had grown. On occasions such as this one, the musicians come together to form one massed band and act as a 'spearhead' leading the way on to the marae, as I describe below.

### **'Clearing the Way'**

*Outside the marae gates, the massed band, Ngā Reo, stops and waits while Rātana leaders and other Mōrehu wanting to be brought on to the marae assemble behind, and for the signal to come on to the marae to be given. I feel a bit self-conscious as the only Pākehā in sight. A kuia standing to one side of the group asks me where I'm from, and when I tell her I'm there hanging out with some of the band members she says "It's all good dear, don't hang out, hang in! You come on with us." After some time, the kaikaranga begin calling from the marae and the band strikes up Rātana March, the whole mass moving forward, visibly charged by the upbeat tempo of the quickstep and the bright sound of brass instruments in the still morning. Drum major out front followed by basses and trombones, euphoniums, drummers, tenor horns and cornets. A Rātana Kātipa with a distinctive white glove worn as an epaulette marches alongside, and the Rātana contingent follows on behind. The kaikaranga call Rātana forward and the band responds, marching on, clear brass tones mixing with high, continuous female voices. Before the speaking ground Ngā Reo splits, and the Rātana contingent walks through the music to the marae ātea.<sup>73</sup>*

Escorting the Church leadership and Mōrehu on to marae and to other locations is an important aspect of the Rātana brass musicians' work. By bringing on the Rātana contingent at Koroneihana, Ngā Reo acted as the spearhead, 'clearing the way' and safeguarding Rātana leaders and other Mōrehu. Leading the procession, Ngā Reo in a sense took up the role of kaikaranga for the visiting Rātana group, responding to the

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<sup>73</sup> Kuia (elderly woman), kaikaranga (woman or women giving the call of welcome), Kātipa (Rātana police officer), marae ātea (area of marae where formal speeches and welcome take place).

karanga (call of welcome) from the kaikaranga on the tangata whenua side and leading the manuhiri (visitors) on to the marae.<sup>74</sup> Karanga, which signals the start of the pōwhiri is in itself a complex practice, essential to the “rituals of encounter” in proper marae procedure (Salmond 1996).<sup>75</sup> Salmond describes karanga as “a long, high call, which sends greeting, invokes the dead, and brings an emotional atmosphere to the marae...” (ibid., 137). Having both practical (or physical) and spiritual elements, karanga acts to “clear the way” (Mead 2003, 119) for the two groups to meet. ‘Clearing the way’ is a phrase also used in the Rātana community to describe the band’s function when marching on to marae.

TW Rātana used brass bands as his spearhead to clear away belief in the old gods and do battle against tohungaism, making way for his ministry and healing works (William, 27/7/14). While battling tohunga is considered to be a thing of the past, people do talk of the continued need for the bands to clear the way: “some of these marae today have still got curlies waiting around the corner, and the carvings...so the band’s job is to clear all those out, clear the way for the Tumuaki, clear the way for the Mōrehu” (Jesse Pene Snr in Wikiriwhi-Heta, 2013). It may be tempting to see the brass bands in this context as having usurped the role of kaikaranga due to the textual content of karanga being bound up with belief in Māori atua and related practices (Salmond 1996). But the situation is more complex. The Rātana movement has not abolished the use of karanga: kaikaranga welcome visitors on to the marae at Rātana Pā, and different Mōrehu communities are said to have differing practices regarding the use of kaikaranga. However, when ‘going out’ to marae, Rātana typically uses its brass bands for this aspect of the pōwhiri (Errol, 31/8/14). As Mary explained, “you don’t need anyone to karanga, [the Reo members] are doing it for you. What better kaikaranga than the Reo? The band really clears out all the spirits” (Mary, 13/9/14). A kaikaranga negotiates the divide between the living and dead, the physical world and

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<sup>74</sup> Some commentators see Rātana’s use of bands coming on to the marae as an impediment to maintaining the tradition of kaikaranga rather than as a different manifestation of this role, as a quote from Ngai Tahu kaikaranga Rānui Ngārimu indicates: “We often see the Rātana band playing in front of a group that are approaching a marae, and for our women who like to call from outside the gate, that poses difficulty. How can you call to an ope (group) who’s walking up the road with a band blasting in front of you? That’s very, very difficult” (Reeves 2014). Those I spoke with at Tūrangawaewae seemed to consider Ngā Reo’s performance an exciting aspect of the day’s proceedings, and the expected way for Rātana to interact on the marae.

<sup>75</sup> Pōwhiri involve a number of different ritual stages (see Mead 2003, 122-124). In this chapter I discuss karanga, whakaeke, whiakōrero and waiata tautoko, which are all aspects of the pōwhiri, translated and described further in-text.

the spiritual world (Salmond 1996). Given their status as spiritual voices, the Rātana brass bands might be thought of as occupying a liminal position between the physical and spiritual realms. Perhaps because of this status, their music is able to effect a transformation of the marae space and atmosphere, similarly to the karanga.

### **Quick March, Slow Approach**

It seems the fundamental purpose of a band's march to encourage unified collective movement through its rhythm. A band sets the tempo for a procession, entraining bodies to move in time and controlling the temporal progression of a parade.

Unsurprisingly, bands on parade or leading a procession of people have frequently been described in this way.<sup>76</sup> On Sunday mornings at the Pā, the members of Ārepa band step in time with the fast duple metre of Rātana March, making quick progress toward the Temple, and the small number of āpotoro and āwhina following behind the band also move along at pace. At Ngāruawāhia, there was an interesting juxtaposition between the upbeat quickstep, Rātana March, and the slow, careful progress of the Rātana contingent coming on to the marae. This part of the pōwhiri—called whakaeke—is inherently slow-moving, with the manuhiri group staying in close formation as it moves toward the marae entrance and on to the marae grounds (Mead 2003, 122).<sup>77</sup> At Tūrangawaewae the band members did step in time while playing Rātana March, but took small steps so as not to march away from the contingent following behind them. Although the band members still moved in time with the music, their quick march did not set the tempo for a fast-moving procession. The progress of the whakaeke was not fundamentally altered by the fast pace of the march, and the group stayed together as a unit. One might wonder why a quickstep march is used to lead a procession that is, by its nature, slow-moving, rather than choosing a march or other tune that matches the pace required for whakaeke. To me, this signals the significance of Rātana March itself—as a tune that is representative of the Rātana movement and constructive of Rātana Mōrehu identity—and I explore this important piece further in chapter four.

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<sup>76</sup> See, for example, Sakakeeny (2013, 25), Brucher & Reily (2013, 19).

<sup>77</sup> Note that Mervyn McLean cites Arapeta Awatere's use of 'whakaeke' to mean a particular type of singing error (1996, 201).

### Brass ‘Songbirds’

During the whaikōrero (oratory on the marae) at Koroneihana, Ngā Reo stood in formation for more than two hours at the edge of the marae ātea, under a permanent tarpaulin erected especially to shelter the Rātana musicians from bad weather on this annual visit. At this particular event, and at some others I am told, it is Rātana practice for the brass musicians to play in support of Rātana speakers. Tahu explained how this came about:

I think the first time that happened would have been at Ngāruawāhia. We had jacked up to do a couple of waiata, and because there were no songbirds [kaiwaiata] there, then we fulfilled that role (Tahu, 27/9/14).

A kaikōrero (male speaker giving whaikōrero) is typically supported by kaiwaiata (singers) singing waiata tautoko (supporting songs) at the conclusion of his speech, with the songs ideally relating to the content of the speech (Salmond 1996, 174). Whaikōrero and the singing of waiata tautoko are in themselves multifaceted art forms, the depths of which are not explored here in detail.<sup>78</sup> Briefly put, whaikōrero include greetings, recitation of whakapapa, and mention of links between the tangata whenua and manuhiri, moving on to a central text of topical relevance (ibid., 158-167). As it was explained to me, Rātana whaikōrero may take a particular form in the acknowledgement of ancestors:

Rather than outlining a long journey of family ancestry...[our speakers] have gone back to saying ‘we acknowledge our ancestors, but we acknowledge our ancestors before them...Ihoa o Ngā Mano...Matua, Tama, Wairua Tapu, Anahera Pono, Māngai.’ Those are the original ancestors...once we hit those five, that’s all our bases covered (Tahu, 27/9/14).

Hymns relate directly to the acknowledgement of ancestry in this case.<sup>79</sup> But the bandleaders also looked for a further connection with the Rātana speeches. At Koroneihana, the supporting hymns were selected by the bandmaster, Tahu, and acting drum major, Gordon, who stepped back in to his former role because the current drum major was unable to attend:

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<sup>78</sup> It is important to note that Ngā Reo does not take on all aspects of the kaiwaiata role. For example, the band would not interrupt the kaikōrero with a waiata if it was thought the speaker was “too garrulous”, an option open to kaiwaiata (Salmond 1996, 174; Ruia, 19/9/14). Furthermore, it is not always Rātana practice for the brass musicians to perform the waiata tautoko (Tahu, 2/7/14). I remind the reader that this discussion is particular to the events of Koroneihana in 2014.

<sup>79</sup> The use of hymns as waiata tautoko is not specific to Rātana. Salmond notes “Today the waiata is sometimes replaced by an action song or a hymn in Māori”, although she is referring to sung hymns, not hymns played by a brass band (1996, 175).

Gordon: We were waiting to see what [the speakers] were talking about, and trying to find something appropriate. Because otherwise it's not appropriate, and we're just playing music (Gordon, 2/9/14).

Tahu: We could be more onto it musically and decide beforehand these are the numbers we're going to play, but in doing that it will contradict what the speaker is talking about (Tahu, 27/9/14).

These quotes suggest that a hymn's referential content is important when played as waiata tautoko by the band, even though the brass players obviously do not sing the words. As these bandleaders describe, the band's hymn should relate to the main content of the kaikōrero's speech, meaning that the connection between waiata tautoko and whaikōrero is maintained, and indicating a shared knowledge of hymns by the Mōrehu present.

At Koroneihana the brass players, or brass voices, fulfilled the roles of kaikaranga and kaiwaiata that are traditionally carried out by human voices, acting to 'clear the way' and to support speakers on the marae. These are distinctly Rātana uses of the brass band. The ways in which the brass players have been integrated into the pōwhiri might be described as part of a process of indigenisation of the brass band in the Rātana context (Kammerer 2008; Booth 2005). The mobility of a brass band would seem to make this ensemble-type easily adaptable into the processional elements of the pōwhiri, and the playing of hymns make the band a fitting support for Rātana kaikōrero. As well as these more general capabilities of a brass band, it also seems that the specific Rātana meanings of the bands—the ways in which they relate to Rātana spirituality and cosmology—mean the brass players can appropriately fulfil these roles on the marae. The brass band has not completely usurped the roles of kaikaranga and kaiwaiata, but has been integrated into the pōwhiri, making for a distinctive, Rātana way of interacting on the marae. By fulfilling these essential roles, the brass players represent and safeguard the Rātana community, and help to maintain the important relationship with Kīngitanga.

Although Ngā Reo indeed gives Rātana a distinctive way of operating on the marae, the brass band is also a point of commonality between Rātana and Kīngitanga given that the King Movement has its own band. During our time at Koroneihana, the King's Band was not in evidence. After breakfast, the Rātana players brought a group

of foreign diplomats onto the marae, at the request of the King Movement also (see figure 4, below).



**Figure 5** Members of Ngā Reo march foreign diplomats on to Tūrangawaewae marae during Koroneihana, 20th August 2014. (Photo by Mark Taylor, Fairfax NZ. Reproduced with permission).

### Transforming Spaces

The church and marae performance contexts explored in this chapter differ in many ways, but there is a noticeable similarity in the sequence of events in each context. In a simplified structure of events, an opening prayer is said by the bandmaster, and the band then plays Rātana March while leading the way to the site of a central event. On arrival, the brass players split into two halves and people walk through the music to the church or marae. During the central event, hymns are played. After the main proceedings are over the band plays Rātana March while moving back to its starting point, where closing prayers are said. Although the visit to Koroneihana was not described by the musicians as an overtly spiritual event or a context of worship, one possible interpretation is that the brass players help to transform the marae setting into a context similar to church service—‘clearing the way’, and in a sense constructing a spiritual space for the Mōrehu wherever they go. Errol alluded to the overlapping physical and spiritual aspects of the band members’ work at Koroneihana:

Us travelling to Tūrangawaewae...for me is a bit of a double-edged trick. One minute you’re the Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, and the next minute you’re actually coexisting with another group—the King Movement—that is part and parcel of what Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana was all about in his time. One of

the things he said to the Māori King was ‘you’re the King, I’m the Prophet, my job is to look after the spiritual side of this whole thing going forward, as far as Māori are concerned.’ So we’re up there doing our physical thing but at the same time there’s a spiritual element as well, which is locked into this whole process (Errol, 31/8/14).

The above quote suggests that while the Rātana bands have both a spiritual and physical name, and some performance contexts are easily separable into distinct categories of physical and spiritual, on other occasions band performances are less clearly one or the other—a reminder that the spiritual and physical coexist in ‘everything that we do’.

### **‘Closing Up’**

There is no filming or recording of any kind allowed at Tūrangawaewae during Koroneihana except by approved media personnel, meaning I did not record the proceedings on the marae or review them afterwards. My impression of Ngā Reo’s playing—albeit through sleep-deprived ears after a long night behind the wheel—was of a tight march onto the marae, and sweet sounding hymns played with drawn out pauses between phrases and a subtle vibrato at cadence points. Some band members I spoke with after the event had a different perspective:

Errol: Did you hear our first tune as we started off?

Nell: Was it slightly wobbly?

Errol: You’re being kind, we all started in different places!

Gordon: To be honest we were struggling, we were just getting through (Errol, 31/8/14 & Gordon, 2/9/14).

Travelling to Ngāruawāhia was the first time I had spoken at length with some of the members of Ārepa band about the brass bands. As I was to learn, they are at times highly self-critical, describing the challenges of playing as a massed band that meets irregularly and often stating the need to ‘go back to the musical fundamentals’ of instrumental technique, music reading and theory within the band collective. This is not unusual for musicians striving for their best musical performance, perhaps, but I also interpreted the band members’ critiques as an indication of how seriously they take their musical work, and their awareness of being representatives of the Rātana community: “We have to start setting a standard...so that when we go [to



Tūrangawaewae] we're representing *this* [Rātana]" (Gordon, 2/9/14). It is true there were a few staggered beginnings and some moments of uncertainty in the delivery of hymns at Tūrangawaewae. But when the band struck up Rātana March to move people off the marae ātea into the breakfast hall, the difference in tone and delivery was palpable, jolting me upright in my seat. After leaving the marae, the band members 'closed up' with prayer and we headed homeward, as described below.

*Playing Rātana March, the members of Ngā Reo march back to their original gathering point near the river, where Tahu closes up with prayers of thanks for the day's work. Feeling bleary eyed, I steel myself for the drive back to Whanganui. But the members of Ārepa band decide to take a detour to Tauranga—a two hour drive in the opposite direction—to make a goodwill visit to Gordon's uncle, a former Reo member sick in hospital. In the van on the way over the Kaimai Ranges, band members listen back to their own discreetly made recordings of the event and evaluate the massed band's playing. At the hospital, they perform for Gordon's uncle in the day room. "Giving them whakapiki ora (healing), it does help them. He sat up in his chair better, and his eyes were sparkling again...just being there for his family too. It was really spiritually uplifting for him and them, because it is draining being in the hospital, especially when you're part of the whānau trying to keep someone well" (Kama, 2/9/14).*

*Finally making it back to Whanganui after close to thirty-six hours without sleep, I drop Kama and her daughter home and head for some rest at Matua Jim's place, feeling a little dazed by the experience and somewhat in awe of the band members' commitment to their musical work.*

## Summary

The exploration of church and marae contexts in this chapter has shown the brass musicians at work in different groupings and in contrasting roles, undertaking essential work on behalf of the Rātana movement and Mōrehu. On Sunday mornings, Te Reo O Te Ārepa's march to Temepara constructs the Pā as spiritual, divine space in preparation for church service, and the Reo uplifts the congregation in worship

inside the Temepara. These are central events in communal, spiritual life at the Pā in which the brass band plays an integral role. At Tūrangawaewae, the members of Ngā Reo act as the spearhead and kaikaranga for the Rātana movement, and fulfil the role of kaiwaiata by playing hymns in support of the Rātana whaikōrero. Here, the brass band has been integrated into the pōwhiri, making for a distinctive, Rātana way of interacting on the marae as well as maintaining the movement's relationship with Kīngitanga. These are just some examples of the localised functions of the brass band in a Rātana setting.

The contexts discussed in this chapter differ in a number of ways. Church service on Sundays at the Pā is a clearly spiritual context, and the brass band acts in its spiritual capacity as a Reo. While the trip to Koroneihana is important to the Rātana movement in political and social terms, and the band might initially be described as working in a physical capacity, the lines between spiritual and physical band performance here are blurred, for some. The brass voices of Ngā Reo might be said to transform places into spiritual spaces for the Rātana movement when it 'goes out', working to 'clear the way' ahead of the Church leadership and Mōrehu.

## Chapter Four

### ‘The Music Goes Round and Round’: Rātana March and the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui

*‘The Music Goes Round and Round’ reads the caption to a newspaper photograph of uniformed Reo musicians on the march at the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui in the mid-1960s. Mary reads out the caption and laughs, leafing through a heavy scrapbook filled with clippings and mementos of community events. “Do you think they’re talking about Rātana March?” I ask, “it’s played over and over on the 25<sup>th</sup> isn’t it?” “Yes, all the time” she replies. “Every child knows it,” Desiree adds, “every child goes around singing it. It must be the most well-known tune in Māoridom, really” (Mary & Desiree, 13/9/14).*

As research for this study progressed, it soon became evident that Rātana March is a highly significant piece of music for the Rātana brass bands and Mōrehu community. During interviews and conversations, in online videos of the bands and in the few mentions of music in the published histories of the Rātana movement, the March came up again and again. And at every event I attended, Rātana March was played by uniformed band members on the move. So far in this thesis, different collectivities within the full collective of Ngā Reo have been described in performance, fulfilling essential roles in church and on the marae. Throughout these contrasting examples—whether an overtly spiritual context of worship, or a less clear-cut physical or spiritual performance context—Rātana March has formed a musical constant: played to march to and from Temple on a Sunday morning; played to lead the Rātana leadership on to Tūrangawaewae marae; played by Ārepa band preparing to leave the Pā to travel ‘out’. I open the chapter by discussing this important piece in the Rātana brass repertoire, which many describe as the anthem of the Rātana movement. The musicians’ feelings about the March, and the frequency with which it is played, point to the power of this piece of music in generating a sense of Mōrehu identity. Rātana March is played over and over at the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui at Rātana Pā, a major spiritual, political and musical event which I describe and discuss in the latter half of this

chapter. The Hui shows the full collective of seven bands in action and illustrates Rātana Pā as the spiritual and political centre of the Mōrehu community. I draw together ideas about space-and-place-making and musicking (Small 1998) in interpreting band processions at the Hui, and consider the role of the brass players on the marae ‘at home’ at Rātana Pā.

Ethnographic descriptions developed from fieldnotes punctuate my discussion of the Hui and are intended to give a sense of the loud, colourful processions that wove throughout this event.

## **Hīkoi Tere! Rātana March as the Anthem of the Movement**

Rātana March is an upbeat quick march played, it would seem, whenever the Rātana bands are on the move. Te Reo O Te Ārepa plays Rātana March every Sunday to and from the Temepara, and members of Ngā Reo play the March to lead Rātana representatives on to marae and other places outside of the Pā. It is also played to bring visitors on to Te Pā o Ngā Ariki<sup>80</sup>, the marae at Rātana Pā, as at the Hui described later in this chapter. Rātana March is not the only march that can fulfil all the marching functions required of the bands. But it is far and away the most frequently played march, if not the most frequently played piece in the repertoire overall.

At Rātana Pā, perhaps more than anywhere else, Rātana March is part of the soundtrack to everyday, communal life.

Errol: Every kid at Rātana Pā could sing the Rātana March...they’d know it backwards, forwards...by the time they do take that step [to join the Reo], they come with that tune in their ears already (Errol, 31/8/14).

Mary: Every child knows it. Every child goes around singing it...on Sundays sometimes the boys today might play a march like Gallant Hearts or Victoria March, sometimes we might have a change. But most of the time it’s coming back [from Temepara] with Rātana March again. The kids love it (Mary, 13/9/14).

Although RMSB’s training processes place a strong emphasis on learning to read music, some pieces in the repertoire are played so frequently that notation is not

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<sup>80</sup> According to Newman, ‘Village of the Leader’ or ‘Sanctuary of Chiefs’ (2006, 59).

required, and Rātana March is certainly one of these. Mary recounted a story of playing at a marching competition in Whanganui during her membership, when Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band saved the day:

One championship we went to, the power cut off. Mt Roskill had the leading brass band in New Zealand, they were the champions. Well, the champions couldn't play for their marching team, no power to read their music! So we played in the dark with no music, playing Rātana March... You should have heard the people after it all finished (Mary, 13/9/14).

The musicians know this march intimately, having grown up with it 'in their ears' and having played it countless times at regular and special events. One can imagine the layers of association with communal moments that Rātana March might have for band members and other Mōrehu, forming part of the soundtrack to so many significant events: proud occasions like leading the parade at major hui, or poignant moments such as tangi.<sup>81</sup> Unlike most marches in the repertoire, Rātana March was composed specifically for the Rātana movement and is played exclusively by the Rātana brass bands. Thus, while it does not differ greatly from many English, European and New Zealand marches in terms of its form and composition, it is a distinguishing musical feature of the Rātana brass tradition, by nature of its exclusive and frequent use.<sup>82</sup>

There is no account of the events surrounding the writing of Rātana March in the 'Brief History of Ngā Reo, Ngā Pēne' (Anaru 1997d), but the story of the March's origins was well-known by the musicians I spoke with. Tahu explained to me how this important piece came to be written.

Tahu: We do have a longstanding relationship with the Whanganui Garrison band, the basis of it being that one of their former conductors, Mr Tom Gray, was the composer of Rātana March... Rātana healed one of [Tom Gray's] family members... and Tom Gray wanted to pay Rātana with money. But Rātana refused, he said 'this is really God's gift'.

Nell: And you don't pay money for it?

Tahu: That's right, you don't accept money for it. But Rātana said to him 'I know who you are, I know what you can do, I'll call upon you when the time

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<sup>81</sup> I did not attend tangi during my fieldwork. During Jim Rourangi's time in the band, the march played at tangi was often 'E Pari Ra', a lament based on the waltz 'Blue Eyes' written by Paraire Tomoana in 1916 to commemorate Māori soldiers lost in WWI, and later adopted by the Royal New Zealand Navy band as a slow march (Jim, 14/9/14; Thomson 1991, 199). Gordon described himself and a small group of band members playing Rātana March at a recent tangi.

<sup>82</sup> The form of Rātana March is Intro AA BB Trio Trio, with A consisting of two strains and the Trio modulating to the subdominant key.

is right'. And when the time was right, he called upon Tom Gray to compose a march that would unite all Māoridom together. And that is why we have Rātana March, because the people that followed Rātana came from all areas of New Zealand (Tahu, 2/7/14).

Rātana March was composed by Tom Gray in 1932, the same year in which the first brass band—Rātana Mōrehu Brass Band—was formed at Rātana Pā.<sup>83</sup> According to Tahu's account, the writing of Rātana March is intertwined with Te Māngai's healing works. It was commissioned (though no money changed hands) for the purpose of unifying Māori under one God, in accordance with the māramatanga. In this sense, drawing the people together into a community of Mōrehu was a fundamental motivation for the commissioning of Rātana March. It seems TW Rātana saw the need for a march specific to the Rātana movement, one that Mōrehu could identify as their own. Perhaps he imagined a march would be most powerful in unifying the Mōrehu, able to be used as a transportable call to attention. Given the bands' role as the spearhead, 'clearing the way' and leading the Church leadership and Mōrehu onto marae and other sites of social and political interaction, it makes sense that a march specific to the Rātana movement was needed, to act as a loud and proud announcement of community and faith.

### **'My Tune', 'Our Anthem'**

When I asked musicians and others in the community at Rātana Pā about their favourite pieces in Ngā Reo's repertoire, most responded with Blaze Away, Koutou Katoa Ra, Lead Kindly Light or another of the marches, hymns or waiata frequently played by the bands.<sup>84</sup> Rātana March, however, was said to be in a category all of its own.

Desiree: Rātana March is our anthem.

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<sup>83</sup> In the final drafting stages of this thesis I discovered that Tom Gray was also known as Tame Karei, and was appointed interim bandmaster of Rātana Mōrehu Brass Band for a short time in 1932 while the bandmaster, Paraire Paikea, was in Wellington on political business. It was explained to me that Tom Gray was not Mōrehu but could temporarily hold the position of bandmaster because of his connection with TW Rātana (pers. comm. Arahi Hagger). The Biographical Dictionary of New Zealand Composers contains an entry for Thomas Gray, a composer and arranger involved with brass bands in the Wellington region in the 1930s (Thomson 1990, 69-70). According to research support from Alexander Turnbull Library and Rātana Community Archives, this is not the same person as Tom Gray, bandmaster of Whanganui Garrison Band and composer of Rātana March.

<sup>84</sup> Koutou Katoa Ra (We Are All Together), also translated as 'Everyone', and 'All of You, of this Small Nation' (Anaru 1997a, 67). The hymn referred to by the interviewee as Lead Kindly Light is called Na Te Matua, Tama (It Was the Father and the Son) in the Rātana hymnal. It is set to a tune by C.H. Purday, to which Lead Kindly Light is commonly sung.

Mary: That's our anthem. You had to play it when you got [to places on tour], you had to play it when you left there, you had to play it at night after church. Wherever we went!

Desiree: Because everybody asks for it, you know? That's our anthem, really (Mary & Desiree 13/9/14).

As Mary and Desiree describe, Rātana March is played everywhere, and is considered an anthem of the Rātana movement.<sup>85</sup> Gordon and Kama talked about the feelings that Rātana March evokes for them, and for others in the Mōrehu community:

Gordon: You're talking about how people relate to the band. There's one piece of music that does something, it has an effect on every Mōrehu, and that is Rātana March. You can play it over and over and you never get sick of it. From the time you're a kid and you hear it, it just takes you to a place...A lot of Mōrehu, even if they haven't been in touch, they hear that music and instantly it's this feeling of, I don't know if it's [a connection with] the old people, but it's a connection and it's through—interesting, yes it's through music, through the Rātana March...I think that's the biggest thing in terms of the band, besides people seeing it, is Rātana March. It's special. You can just see whenever we play it and people hear it, it's not your standard Invercargill March or whatever. There's something about this march that just catches your ear (Gordon, 2/9/14).

Kama: I know that wherever I go and I hear Rātana March, that's *my* tune. And I think every Mōrehu feels the same way, we *all* know that tune, so it *always* brings us together...Wherever you go, you hear Rātana March, 'boom, that's my song!' (Kama, 2/9/14).

As these comments suggest, Rātana March—like the bands themselves—is a transportable, musical marker of community with which Mōrehu can identify 'wherever they go', a common musical element that acts to bind the Mōrehu together in disparate locations. For Gordon, Kama, Mary, Desiree, and others I spoke with in organised interviews and informal chats, Rātana March stirs up feelings of belonging and togetherness, of being a part of the Mōrehu community, spread as it is throughout the country and internationally. The March is described as 'my song', speaking of Mōrehu identity, and 'our anthem', speaking of a sense of shared ownership of the music. Rātana March stimulates feelings of inclusivity for these band members, and they also perceive that 'every Mōrehu' has similar responses to this piece of music.

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<sup>85</sup> Ma Te Marie has also been described as the anthem of the Rātana movement (Newman 2006).

Rātana March is exclusive to the Rātana movement, and is played by all of the seven brass bands around the country. Although wordless, it was described as an anthem by many of those I spoke with, and as such might be said to “index a whole range of beliefs, attitudes and aspirations” (Turino 2008, 219) particular to the Rātana Mōrehu community and political movement. This march seems particularly powerful in generating a sense of community and in representing the Rātana movement outwardly. The band members play Rātana March not only to lead the way to Temple or to move people from place to place, but also to move *themselves* around—when there is nobody following behind the band, and nobody around to watch them play. Late at night when preparing to leave the Pā to ‘go out’, the members of Ārepa band played Rātana March approaching the Temple gates, while the rest of the Pā community was at home. At the hui described below, a Reo struck up Rātana March when arriving back at its accommodation at the local school, with nobody but a small, sunburnt ethnographer watching on. The band members do not simply march in service of others in the community: they are Mōrehu musicians, and Rātana March is their anthem also. For the band members, this march has layers of association with training and regular band events, and has a special significance in their musical work.

The importance of Rātana March is illustrated by a current, contentious situation in which a brass band has been formed in another part of the country, calling itself a Reo without being sanctioned by the Church. This is considered problematic for several reasons, but Tahu identified the use of Rātana March as the most immediate problem:

The misleading thing is that they’re using our March...[I have to] ask them to refrain from playing Rātana March...It’s misleading our people...Because they haven’t been sanctioned. People are asking questions: ‘What Reo is this? That’s a nice Reo. What’s the name of this?’ And people would just go along with it and think, ‘oh well, there must be an eighth band’ (Tahu, 27/9/14).

It seems that the use of Rātana March is what signals to onlookers that this band has Reo status, perhaps more than other aspects of practice such as wearing uniform, and more than any other piece in the repertoire. The significance of Rātana March is further attested to by the fact that I was asked not to represent it in notation in this thesis: “The sheet music, [we] don’t really want it getting it out there...mainly because of other organisations getting hold of it. They’ve kind of played around with



it a bit” (Tahu, 27/9/14). Given this study’s focus on social and cultural factors, I felt it unnecessary to represent the March in notated form.<sup>86</sup> But Tahu’s request brings up interesting ethical issues regarding ethnographic representation and points to the significance of codifying and distributing music in notated form, which, for some, can pose a problem. The March is so special, and so representative of the Rātana community and of the Rātana brass bands themselves, it should only be played by Reo that have been sanctioned by the Church. Rātana March is notated in RMSB’s book of marches and hymns. However, Tahu felt that representing the March in notation in this thesis—which would then be accessible online and through the university library—would be unwise, in case this led to its misuse by groups not associated with or sanctioned by the Church.

Rātana March dominates the soundtrack to the annual January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui at Rātana Pā. At the Hui in 2015, the members of Ngā Reo were hard at work, weaving the sounds of cornets, euphoniums, basses and trombones around the small township.

### **‘The Music Goes Round and Round’ at the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui**

“See you on the 25<sup>th</sup>” was a phrase I frequently heard spoken between visiting Mōrehu and their friends or relatives living at Rātana Pā after Sunday morning whakamoemiti.<sup>87</sup> The annual January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui is a momentous occasion when thousands of Mōrehu from around the country and overseas converge on the small Pā to celebrate Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana’s birthday.<sup>88</sup> The Hui lasts for almost a week surrounding the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, and official visitors including other churches, iwi, and Kīngitanga make the pilgrimage to reaffirm ties with the Rātana movement. This event is considered the start of the political year, with leaders of the country’s major political parties visiting in a formal capacity, speaking on the marae and vying for favour with the movement’s leadership and with Mōrehu voters. For its significance

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<sup>86</sup> I refer readers to the accompanying CD for audio examples of Rātana March. Recordings were sanctioned by the bandmaster, and by the Kātipa Office at the Rātana 25<sup>th</sup> Hui. At the Hui, recording, filming or photographing of church services in the Temepara and on the marae was not permitted, hence the lack of hymns on the CD.

<sup>87</sup> The Hui is referred to in the media as the ‘Rātana Celebrations’ and the ‘Rātana 25<sup>th</sup> Hui’, and in the Rātana Pā community as the ‘January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui’, or simply ‘the 25<sup>th</sup>’.

<sup>88</sup> Numbers at the 2015 Hui were estimated at between five thousand and seven thousand. The largest January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui in research participants’ memory—marking the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of TW Rātana in 1973—drew an estimated crowd of between twenty thousand and thirty thousand people.

in national politics the Hui gains considerable media attention, though media presence at the 2015 Hui dwindled noticeably after the political component had finished on January 23rd, and had disappeared almost completely by January 25<sup>th</sup>. With their brightly coloured uniforms and shining instruments, the brass musicians make attractive subjects for photographers and television camera-people to capture, and they feature in much media representation of the Hui.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Hui is not just about political campaigning or marking the date of the founder's birth. It is described as a time when the Mōrehu come together in worship, reconnect with friends and family, make new friendships, and discuss issues facing the community and Church. The Hui is a major event in the year for the local community at the Pā, for the wider Mōrehu community, and for the seven Rātana brass bands. In 2015, I attended the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui at Rātana Pā, as described in the remainder of this chapter.

### **The Rātana 25<sup>th</sup> Hui in 2015**

In January 2015, the sun blazed down relentlessly on attendees for the full week of the Hui. Tents and campervans crammed into back yards and cars filled grass verges. The usually quiet and serene Pā buzzed with activity from early until late, with dance aerobics starting at 7am on the marae stage, children taking over the closed-off streets in games, and musical entertainment lasting into the night. Large gatherings are not unusual at the Pā. Members of the Pā community and many of those coming in from outside all had a role to play in ensuring that proper manaakitanga (hospitality) was provided, whether cooking in the Kii Koopu, emptying rubbish bins around the Pā, taking shifts at the twenty four-hour security entrance, or staffing the Church office.<sup>89</sup> Kātipa and Māori Wardens were out in full force ensuring the smooth running of the event. As well as formal proceedings on the marae, church services, sports competitions and meetings took place throughout the day. After evening whakamoemiti outdoors on the marae, the stage and marae grounds were taken over by the 'Mōrehu Got Talent' song quest, and performances by well-known and up and coming Mōrehu artists. And everywhere, the sound of brass.

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<sup>89</sup> Kii Koopu is the area of the Manuao encompassing the kitchen and dining hall (Anaru 1997c).

## Brass Whānau

With full representation from each of the seven brass bands making a combined membership of close to 150 players, the musical collective of Ngā Reo was a powerful presence at the Hui. The brass musicians spanned the generations, with seasoned players alongside young children perhaps attending their first Hui as members of the Reo. During the Hui, the seven bands performed in different combinations, merging into instrumental sections to form a massed band, or remaining in their individual band units to play alone or within the greater marching order of the seven-band collective. These different formations were a reminder of the multiple, interrelated musical collectivities in the large Rātana brass family.



Figure 1 Band members span the generations, January 25th Hui 2015. (Photograph by Molly Marshall).



Figure 2 Young members of Te Reo O Te Whaea O Te Katoa take a break in the middle of a hot day's work at the Hui, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2015. (Author's photograph).

The brass bands arriving from around the country followed the usual procedure for visitors to the Pā, firstly going in to the Temple to give thanks for a safe journey before being marched on to the marae by Ārepa band and any other Reo already present for a formal welcome. “I think that started off when all the bands started forming around the country, and Te Reo O Te Ārepa was always there to pick them up [when they visited the Pā]. It’s just like you greeting a little brother at the door” (Tahu, 27/9/14). The musicians showed each other due respect, each band being ceremoniously led on to the marae by those band members already present playing Rātana March, just as any other important visitor to the Pā is received.

According to the Hui programme, the morning of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> was to be particularly busy for the Reo members, with Kīngitanga, Te Hāhi Ringatū (The Ringatū Church), and politicians from the country’s major political parties set to arrive back to back. Members of Te Reo O Piri Wiri Tua and Te Reo O Te Ōmeka from the Far North and Te Reo O Te Whaea O Te Katoa based in the South Island arrived at the Pā later than expected on Friday morning, at around 8am.

*Members of the three Reo arriving at the Pā pack into the Temepara for a welcome service. Close to sixty musicians fill the band pews, also taking over those usually reserved for the āpotoro during a regular Sunday service. Outside, members of Ārepa band, and of the Hāmuera, Tuāhine and Tuatoru bands that had arrived the day before, wait at the corner of Taihauāuru and Waipounamu Streets. With little time left before the official visitors are due to arrive, members of Piri Wiri Tua, Ōmeka and Te Whaea O Te Katoa emerge from the Temple and take up formation behind the four waiting Reo. The day’s tight schedule means there is not time for the northern and southern bands to be welcomed onto the marae. Instead, the drum major directs the groups to turn and face each other, and the band members proceed to greet one another, waeiving through their formation in snaking lines, shaking hands and giving hongis while the attending crowd watches on.<sup>90</sup>*

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<sup>90</sup> hongis (press noses in greeting).

There is nothing unusual about colleagues who have traveled from afar greeting one another in this way, particularly when they are also friends and even relatives. But the formalised way in which this greeting was conducted seemed significant, making up for the lack of a full welcome on to the marae. It seemed fitting, also, with the formality of the work that was about to be undertaken by the band members, who are the first to receive official visitors to the Pā. This was an important moment of reconnection between the musicians from different parts of the country before they set out to do their work together, a display of musical kinship that was watched by onlookers. Formal moments of interaction such as this marked out the band as a collective in its own right. The camaraderie between band members was evident during the Hui, as they alternately waited around in the hot sun and pulled together for a tight march or display. These moments were a reminder of the social relationships generated by collective music making, and the idea that banding can constitute community for members—the band as whānau.



**Figure 3** Members of the seven brass bands greet one another at the January 25th Hui, 2015. (Author's photograph).

The Ngā Reo leadership seemed keenly aware of keeping their players tight and together during marches—particularly important given the large number of players present, and the lack of opportunity to rehearse with the full collective. Manoeuvring the band members around the small streets of the Pā is no easy task for the drum major of Ngā Reo, as Gordon recalled from his time in the role:

It's a big responsibility, because when you're marching two hundred-odd brass members around the little streets of Rātana here, you've got to think about how you're going to manoeuvre them, what's the best way of getting them from point A to point B. It's all about timing, because you don't want to be standing out on parade too long. Most of the time it's quite hot in January, so you want to be out in the sun for as little time as possible (Gordon, 2/9/14).  
(*CD Track 4, band commands*).



Throughout the Hui the brass players were hard at work bringing manuhiri on to the marae, moving visitors and Mōrehu from one place to another, and playing before, during and after whakamoemiti in the Temple and on the marae grounds. In a more ‘physical’ performance capacity, some bands gave a display as a demonstration of their skill.<sup>91</sup> Others performed entertainment repertoire on the marae, sometimes accompanying a singer, or joined by a keyboard player or other instrumentalist. At points, the crowd was reminded of the bands’ status in the Church: during an evening sermon, an āpotoro from the Far North pointed out each of the Reo seated on the marae, noting where they hailed from and describing them as the ‘vanguard’ of the movement. “No-one should be in front of them, they are always at the forefront. Heaven help anyone who tries to mess with these guys. When you see them walking, it’s God walking on Earth.”

As at Ngāruawahia, and before Te Reo O Te Ārepa’s march to Temepara on Sundays, many of Ngā Reo’s marches at the Hui were framed with prayer, often said at the corner of Taihauāuru and Waipounamu Streets (also referred to as Temple Corner) before marching to the marae, and again after marching back. Prayers were not restricted to occasions surrounding church service but seemed to be said before almost every march. The frequency with which prayers were said suggested the underlying spiritual nature of the brass players’ musical work at the Hui, regardless of which visitors were being ‘brought on’ and regardless of whether the surrounding context was one of worship or formal meeting.



**Figure 4** Aerial view of Rātana Pā, showing the route between the marae grounds (bottom right) and Temepara (top left). (Still image from drone camera footage, courtesy of Tahu Pikimaui).

<sup>91</sup> Comment threads on YouTube videos of band displays from past Hui indicate a healthy competitiveness between Mōrehu from different areas in support of their own band.

### Spearhead and Safeguard

At Rātana Pā, it is usual procedure for significant visitors at any time of year to be welcomed on to the marae by Te Reo O Te Ārepa. When the Rātana movement ‘goes out’ from the Pā, the brass players act as the spearhead, clearing the way in front of the Rātana contingent. At home at the Pā, the band members are less of a spearhead than a part of the welcome extended to those arriving. However their role in the pōwhiri still involves safeguarding the Mōrehu and ‘clearing the way’ for groups to meet on the marae. At the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui, members of Ngā Reo brought visitors on to the marae several times a day playing Rātana March, as described in the narrative extracts below.

*On Friday morning, about fifty members of Ngā Reo meet face to face with the King’s Band outside the Temepara. Striking up Rātana March, Ngā Reo turns down Taihauāuru Street, with the King’s band and members of the King movement following silently on behind. Once on the marae grounds, Ngā Reo splits and continues to play as Kīngitanga approaches slowly and stands in the gap created between the Rātana players. At the conclusion of Rātana March, Ngā Reo holds position, and for a brief moment the kaikaranga can be heard clearly calling to the visitors, before the King’s Band strikes up its own tune, marching forward and bringing its contingent fully onto the marae. (CD Track 5).*

*The Rātana brass players march by drumbeat back to Temple Corner while the formal speech making gets underway. Whaikōrero are not to be rushed, and in this case the speeches last well over two hours. Under an unforgiving sun, the band members wait in full uniform to bring the next group of manuhiri—politicians from the country’s major political parties—on to the marae. The musicians chat and catch up, some finding snippets of shade under awnings and verandahs, leaning their instruments against curbsides and cars. There is a call to attention and Ngā Reo takes up formation in instrumental sections on the road, the surrounding crowd readying itself for action. But the waiting continues, seemingly endless, though this time the musicians stand quiet and orderly, awaiting commands—composed and disciplined representatives of the Rātana movement. Finally comes the whistle, the shout of “Hīkoi Tere!”, and Rātana March begins.*

*The drum major launches forward with sparkling mace in hand. Television camera-people dart around in front of the band, and the official Church archivist's new drone-mounted camera whizzes overhead, its loud buzz soon drowned out by the powerful sound of the massed band. Swept along by the crowd, I scoot alongside with my audio recorder, nearly trampled by leader of the New Zealand First party, Winston Peters, who pops out from his position behind the band. On the marae, the massed band's split is clean. Tight cornet runs and powerful bass drum hits bounce off the Manuao's frontage, spilling out over the marae as Rātana March nears its conclusion. This march has a different air about it to those earlier in the Hui. The band members appear resolute, their unified movements and bright uniforms impressive, even a little menacing, and the youngest players are not present. As the politicians walk through the gap between the musicians still playing, I recall Tahu talking about the double-edge of the Reo in this context, not only showing respect to visitors but also safeguarding the Mōrehu and cleansing the intentions of those coming through the music.*



**Figure 5 Bass section and drum major's mace. (Photograph by Molly Marshall).**

The brass bands are an integral aspect of marae procedure at Rātana Pā and this is particularly evident at the Hui, during which band members bring visitors on to the marae several times a day.<sup>92</sup> By leading manuhiri on to the marae, the brass players perform multiple duties. They show respect to visitors on behalf of the Rātana

<sup>92</sup> Unlike at Koroneihana, I did not see the brass musicians perform waiata tautoko during the Hui.



movement, lending formality to the pōwhiri and receiving guests in the way that is expected of Rātana. In doing so, they play a significant role in maintaining social and political relationships that are important to the Rātana movement. At the same time, the brass players might be said to safeguard the Mōrehu and “cleanse the intentions” (Tahu, 27/9/14) of those coming through the music on to the marae. The brass band does not usurp the position of kaikaranga here, either for the visiting parties, or for the Rātana movement: some visiting groups brought their own kaikaranga with them, and Rātana kaikaranga call to the visitors from the marae. Rather, the Reo seem to add an extra, spiritual layer, helping to ‘clear the way’ for the two groups to meet, and contributing to an atmosphere of formality and celebration. As Arahi Hagger notes, “the kawa (marae protocol) of Rātana is totally to do with Ihoa o Ngā Mano...the kaikaranga will be representing the call of the Holy Spirit to all people to gather on the marae” (pers. comm., 25/1/15).<sup>93</sup> The Reo make for a distinctive ritual of encounter on the marae at Rātana Pā not simply because of the obvious fact they are brass bands playing a role in the pōwhiri, but also because of the less observable fact that they are spiritual vehicles investing and enveloping proceedings with Rātana spirituality, just as the kaikaranga, kaikōrero, and others fulfilling formal roles on this marae are also doing.

The brass instruments mixing with haka and karanga are a characteristic sound of this marae, an example of Schafer’s ‘soundmark’, a “community sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded” (Schafer 1977, 10). As the musicians enter the marae playing Rātana March, the sounds of their instruments overlap with the voices of those performing haka pōwhiri and with the kaikaranga’s call.<sup>94</sup> Their combined sound is reflected off the Manuao frontage on one side of the marae grounds, and TW Rātana’s original homestead, Orakeinui—the site of his first visions—on another. These buildings, significant beyond their practical function, represent aspects of Rātana history and faith. Unlike other outdoor areas at the Pā, the sound here is acoustically contained. The polyphony of brass voices and human voices connecting with the surfaces of these meaningful structures might be said to

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<sup>93</sup> Marae kawa (protocols governing marae procedure) (Mead 2003, 8, 117). It is interesting to note here that marae kawa often have regional or hapū-based differences (ibid., 131). The Rātana Mōrehu community cuts across iwi lines and the māramatanga or shared spiritual belief is fundamental to the marae kawa at Rātana Pā (pers. comm. Arahi Hagger).

<sup>94</sup> Haka pōwhiri – Ceremonial dance performed to welcome visitors (Moorfield 2011).

result in a “culturally particular sense of place” (Feld 1996, 91), grounding the community in its spiritual home at the Pā.<sup>95</sup> It is not just the mixing of sonic elements and symbolic buildings that is important here, but also the fact that the human voices and the brass voices are sounding for God. (*CD Track 6*).

*At the conclusion of Rātana March, the voices of the haka pōwhiri and kaikaranga emerge in the space left by the brass instruments, and the members of Ngā Reo march off the marae back to Temple Corner by drumbeat.*

### **The Procession to Temple on the 25<sup>th</sup> Day**

The major focus of the Hui is the 25<sup>th</sup> of January itself—TW Rātana’s birthday. While whakamoemiti and other events take place throughout the day, the central event is the morning service in the Temepara. The entire Ngā Reo contingent leads the community in to worship in a long procession, as I describe in the sections below.

In 2015, January 25<sup>th</sup> fell on a Sunday, felt to be particularly auspicious. By 9:30am a crowd milled around the marae and Manuao, instructions for the upcoming procession to Temepara issuing forth from the public address system: “Ngā Reo will lead us there, and no-one is to go in front of the band.” The Temepara bells began to ring at 10:15am and shortly afterward the 150-odd members of the seven Reo marched on to the marae by drumbeat, having processed from the kura around the edge of the Pā and past the Temple with a small crowd walking alongside. This time the players were organised into individual band units, presenting as bright blocks of colour in tidy formation with drummers positioned in the middle: Te Reo O Ngā Tuāhine, Te Whaea O Te Katoa, Tuatoru, Hāmuera, Piri Wiri Tua, Ōmeka, and Ārepa. Once on the marae the players turned, reversing the order to put Ārepa in the lead. Standing in this marching order, the seven Reo gave a colourful depiction of their Rātana brass whakapapa—not only representing the order of their establishment, but also the Rātana family figures and the aspects of Rātana history and faith linked with their spiritual names. It seemed significant that the bands were configured in this marching

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<sup>95</sup> Matt Sakakeeny (2010) also draws on Schafer’s ‘soundmark’ (1977) and Feld’s ‘acoustemology of place’ (1996), in describing the combination of locally meaningful sounds and structures at the culmination of a front-line parade in the New Orleans Tremé neighbourhood.

order on the 25th, rather than in the merged instrumental sections in which they had generally appeared up until this point. The marching order of the bands seemed related to the clearly spiritual nature of this particular day, and the central event of worship and celebration that was about to come.



**Figure 6 Members of Ngā Reo in marching order on the marae at Rātana Pā, January 25th 2015.**  
(Photograph by Molly Marshall).

*At the sound of the second bell, Ngā Reo, with Ārepa in the lead, begins Rātana March, leading the people from the marae to Temepara for whakamoemiti on TW Rātana's 142<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Brightly dressed āpotoro, āwhina, others with formal roles in the Church, Mōrehu and other visitors process along Taihauāuru Street following the brass players. Although Rātana March is a quickstep, the procession moves anything but quickly. Band members take small, careful steps, holding their position amongst the large number of players and followers, keeping steady pace so as not to upset the formation of the Reo or the unity of the parade. I catch glimpses of some of the musicians I know: Kama, Gordon, Tahu and Sadé hard at work in the band, and William walking with the official Church contingent. Arahi works around the edges of the crowd with his camera, documenting for posterity. Everyone is in behind and beside the band, following on, filming with cell phones, moving together.*

*At the Temepara, the musicians split to either side of the gateway and onto the field opposite, the crowd moving forward through their powerful collective sound. Gordon, on bass drum, moves back and forth along the*

*front line of a group of players, ensuring they can hear his steady beat as the band members continue to pound out Rātana March. The air vibrates with brass tones, the music goes round and round, and by this stage I’ve lost count of how many repetitions of the March have been played. The people continue to file through the musical gateway into the Temple, packing out its 2,000-seat capacity and spilling out into the surrounding grounds. Not all of the musicians can fit into the band pews inside the Temple, so some stay outside on the grass during the service, sheltering from the intense sunshine under trees and umbrellas. From outside, the āpotoro, Reo and Koaia can be heard clearly through wide open doors, letting the sound out and the air in. After the closing hymn Ma Te Marie, the band members are on the march once again, leading the Mōrehu back to the marae for another service. (CD Track 7).*

Covering a distance of less than two hundred metres, the procession from marae to Temepara lasted close to twenty minutes, with the band members playing Rātana March over and over until everyone had entered through the Temple gateway. The slow progress was partly due to the large numbers of people in the band collective and following on behind. But the incongruity of the spritely quickstep and the procession’s pace also reminded me of the slow, careful approach of the whakaeke onto the marae at Ngāruawahia. On the 25<sup>th</sup> I felt this moment was drawn out in order to properly mark the date of TW Rātana’s birth, transforming the space into one of celebration and worship, announcing and enacting the Pā as the spiritual home of the community. The peak experience of the procession—at least for those following along like me—came at the Temple gateway, walking through over one hundred brass players playing at volume, an emotionally and physically affecting experience.

The procession to the Temepara was the loudest, most obvious point during the Hui at which Te Iwi Mōrehu were linked together in musical procession and common faith. Some sang or whistled along to the wordless anthem Rātana March, many filmed or photographed the band members and the rest of the procession. The musical collective of Ngā Reo, official Church leadership and other Mōrehu joined together in musicking on parade when “everyone feels a part of the band” (Kama, 2/9/14). And yet it would be false to suggest that this was the only, or even the most powerful,

moment at which the community was bound together in music-making during the Hui. Inside the Temple, and outdoors on the marae at evening whakamoemiti, the Reo, Koaea and congregation came together in worship. The people's voices and brass voices united in hymnody, singing Rātana hymns that, through their texts, reaffirm the community's unity, identity and shared faith: 'Koutou Katoa Ra' (We Are All Together), 'Te Iwi Mōrehu', 'Ma Te Marie', among many others. These hymns, and the participatory nature of their performance, are surely powerful in engendering feelings of togetherness and community.<sup>96</sup>

### **Community Sounds and Spaces**

During the daytime, the Hui seemed like a continuous sequence of procession and worship. The pathway between Temple Corner, the marae and the Temepara was trod over and over by band members: welcoming visitors and moving people from one place to another; connecting the main sites of formal gathering and worship; investing proceedings with the spiritual. The sequence of marches and hymns was punctuated by 'physical' performances from one or other of the brass bands playing waiata or giving a band display. At other times, the brass musicians wove around the small streets and outer edges of the Pā, marching only to drum beat or playing as they went. Their music and marching enveloped the township from the arrival of the first visitors early in the morning until the close of evening whakamoemiti on the marae, contributing to a formal, celebratory atmosphere, and heightening the Pā as a spiritual space. Despite the hot weather, the band members remained on duty throughout the week. Their playing and performance was not merely symbolic, but an absolutely essential part of Hui, marae and church proceedings.

In the evenings, the crowd spread out across the marae to watch singers compete in 'Mōrehu Got Talent' and listen to Mōrehu reggae bands like RANEA and House of Shem. The MC and musicians addressed the audience as 'whānau' and 'Te Iwi Mōrehu'. Unsurprisingly, many of the entertainment acts featured brass instruments in the line-up and some members of Ngā Reo, including Tahu and his father, played into the night after a long day's work in the Reo. During the Hui, the sounds of cornets, tenor horns, baritone horns, euphoniums, trombones and basses fused at

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<sup>96</sup> By describing a 'feeling' of community, I refer to Cohen's concept of community as "a matter of feeling" (1985, 21).

different moments with karanga and haka, with people's voices in hymn singing, with hip-hop blasting from car stereos, and with reggae basslines echoing off the Manuao around the marae. Here, perhaps more than anywhere, the deep resonances of brass bands in the Rātana Mōrehu community can be clearly heard.

*While sitting under a tree near the edge of the Pā to escape the blazing sun, I overhear a couple of teenagers talking, one saying to the other “man, I want to learn trombone!” Ordering coffee at the mobile cart, the barista from nearby Marton tells me “I hope my kids make it in time to see the brass bands, I really want them to join.” Finding positions out of the wind to set up my audio recorder, I hear children hum snippets of Rātana March or tap out its rhythm on the fence as they wait for the band to begin. Recording the band outside the Temple gates, a small boy toddles past my knee with a miniature toy bass drum attached to his front. The brass band members are an obvious point of focus. “After all these years, when we see the Reo players on the 25th, we all still love watching them march. We’re so proud to watch them” (Mary, 13/9/14).*





**Figure 7 ‘Mōrehu Got Talent’ on the marae stage at the January 25th Hui, 2015.**  
(Author’s photograph).



**Figure 8 Members of Kaikohe Mōrehu Brass Band dance with kuia on the marae.**  
(Photograph by Molly Marshall).

## Summary

In this chapter, Rātana March has been described as the anthem of the Rātana movement. The March seems to be particularly powerful in generating a sense of shared, Mōrehu identity and feelings of belonging to the Mōrehu community for those I spoke with. Rātana March is also a distinguishing musical feature of the Rātana

brass tradition, exclusive to the Rātana brass bands and played by uniformed Reo musicians on the march everywhere. The ethnographic account of the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui in this chapter has shown just some of the uses to which Rātana March is put. On January 25<sup>th</sup> itself, Rātana March was played countless times back to back while the bands and crowd processed along the route from the marae to the Temepara, musicking together on parade.

The Rātana Reo are an essential and distinctive element of marae procedure at Rātana Pā. Like others fulfilling formal roles, the brass musicians invest proceedings with the spiritual. The polyphony of brass instruments, haka and karanga on this marae might be said to construct a culturally specific sense of place at Rātana Pā, the epicentre of Te Iwi Mōrehu.

Over the course of the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui the band members were hard at work, with physical and spiritual purpose to their playing. Members of the Rātana brass band whānau epitomised commitment and dedication, standing for hours in the hot sun in full uniform, keeping their sound and formation tight, proud representatives of the Rātana movement. At the Hui, the level of feeling attached to the bands and the essential nature of their musical work in the Mōrehu community became apparent.





Figure 9 Tahu Pikimaui leading Te Reo O Te Ārepa, Rātana Pā, January 2015. (Photograph by Arahi Hagger).



Figure 10 Members of Ngā Reo marching to Temepara, Rātana Pā, January 25th 2015. (Photograph by Molly Marshall).





Figure 11 Gordon Ririnui, marching to Temepara, Rātana Pā, January 25<sup>th</sup> 2015.  
(Photograph by Molly Marshall).



Figure 12 Āpotoro of Te Hāhi Rātana, procession to Temepara, Rātana Pā, January 25th 2015.  
(Photograph by Molly Marshall).





Figure 13 Arriving at the Temepara gates, procession to Temepara, Rātana Pā, January 25th 2015.  
(Author's photograph).



Figure 14 Entering through the musical Temepara gateway, Rātana Pā, January 25th 2015.  
(Photograph by Molly Marshall).



# Chapter Five

## Conclusions

This thesis has explored Rātana brass bands in a context of community, with a focus on the elder sibling of the Rātana band family—Te Reo O Te Ārepa, the Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band. I have described musical events in church, on marae, and at a major hui, investigating some of the distinctly Rātana meanings and functions of the brass bands in these contexts. Taking a contemporary ethnographic focus, I have considered some of the ways in which brass bands and music are an integral part of social and spiritual life, acting to bind together members Te Iwi Mōrehu and smaller collectivities within this large community. Throughout the thesis, and especially in chapters two and three, I have attempted to incorporate the voices of Te Reo O Te Ārepa band members.

The ethnographic research presented in this thesis has illustrated the interrelated workings of the whānau of Rātana brass bands by describing Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, the massed band Ngā Reo, and the full collective of seven bands, also called Ngā Reo, in performance. The seven Rātana Reo make up a symbolic musical family, their whakapapa having implications for the organisational structure of the bands and influencing how they operate together in performance. For the Rātana musicians and others in the community, the brass bands are invested with multiple layers of meaning. An exploration of one band's spiritual name—Te Reo O Te Ārepa—intimated a deep connection between the brass bands and Rātana spirituality and history. Collectively called Ngā Reo—The Voices—the brass bands might be considered metaphorical voices for the Rātana family members and figures in the cosmology that they represent. The biblical significances of the trumpet inspired the establishment of the brass bands and, according to some, gave rise to particular practices such as marching to Temepara. But the Scriptures are also a continued source of meaning in relation to the Reo for some people, the bands' biblical symbolism having shifted along with the changing nature of their musical work over time.

As well as these spiritual resonances, the Rātana bands are associated with the tribal regions from which Te Iwi Mōrehu came together, making the collective of Ngā Reo analogous to the Mōrehu community. Through their frequent marching, playing in church services and playing for entertainment, the brass bands are a source of shared musical experience for the Mōrehu. The bands give rise to social connections not only between band members collectively making music, but between all those involved in musicking together in the participatory processions and hymns that weave through everyday life at the Pā and large community gatherings like the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui. Conversations with bandmembers about Rātana March encapsulated the power of this piece in generating a sense of Mōrehu identity.

At Rātana Pā many communal events including band rehearsals and marches are framed with prayer, a reminder that for the Mōrehu “there is a physical here and now, but there is also a spirituality to *everything* that we do” (William, 27/7/14). A dual spiritual-physical Māori worldview has particular articulations in the Rātana Mōrehu community and special implications for the brass bands, each band having both a physical and spiritual name used in discrete contexts. It also seems that some occasions on which the band plays are less easily separable into physical (entertainment and fundraising) and spiritual (worship) contexts, as suggested in relation to Ngā Reo playing at Tūrangawaewae, and during the 25<sup>th</sup> Hui when church services, formal marae proceedings and musical entertainment run back to back. The spiritual and physical commingle in music and performance, just as they do in other areas of life.

The marae and Temepara are central sites of communal gathering and worship at Rātana Pā. In each place, Reo members play an essential part in proceedings, suggesting the significance of brass bands in Rātana lifeways. On the marae, the Reo are talked of as the spearhead and safeguard for the Rātana movement. Brass musicians fulfil the roles of kaikaranga and kaiwaiata traditionally carried out by human voices, and in this context the brass voices of Ngā Reo might be thought of as occupying a liminal position between the spiritual and physical realms. I have suggested that this status between two realms allows the Reo to act as the spearhead, marching ahead to ‘clear the way’ and create spiritual spaces, safeguarding the Church leadership and other Mōrehu wherever they go. The brass players have not

usurped these formal roles on the marae, either when ‘going out’ or ‘at home’ at Rātana Pā. Rather, the bands are integrated into the pōwhiri and add a further layer of Rātana spirituality to proceedings in a musical way that is particular to the Mōrehu community. Marching to Temepara at Rātana Pā, Te Reo O Te Ārepa also ‘clears the way’. The phrase ‘clearing the way’—used to describe the effect of the Reo’s march, and the effect of karanga—forms a parallel between the church and the marae, and suggests the spirituality inherent in the bands’ playing in each context.

Rātana brass banding is a contemporary form of Māori music-making with origins in the early twentieth century. This thesis contributes to New Zealand and Māori music studies, in which the Rātana bands have been the subject of only limited research (Hebert 2008). A number of Māori and, more specifically, Rātana terms, concepts and aspects of worldview have been important in this study. Making Rātana concepts and te reo Māori more central to methodology and interpretation in future research about these brass bands may lead to a greater understanding of the interrelationship between music, faith and identity in this largely Māori community. And future ethnographic research investigating the Kīngitanga band may reveal more about the part that brass bands continue to play in these two long-established movements for Māori unity.

The musicians of Ngā Reo show a firm dedication to their band, community and māramatanga, marching whatever the weather—in rain, wind, or scorching sunshine. In Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band, members speak about being in the band as a way of being involved in, and giving back to, the community and Church. Although I have characterised the brass players’ activities as musical ‘work’ throughout the thesis, I believe that being in the band is a source of meaningfulness in the musicians’ lives beyond the implications of this term. Band membership is not only a service to community, but also develops valued personal qualities and musical skills, sparks lifelong passions for music making, provides a foundation from which some go on to careers in music, and builds close relationships through collective music making, with the band as a kind of whānau. The brass players uplift the congregation in worship, and playing in the band is also talked of as a personal form of worship by these Mōrehu musicians.

Following the approach of two recent ethnographies of brass bands, I have incorporated band members' voices into this thesis (Sakakeeny 2013; Bruinders 2012). This approach has allowed me to reach Mōrehu musicians' perspectives about their own music making, band and faith. Bringing the musicians' voices into the text was initially motivated by an interest in people's stories and a desire to personalise this study of music and community (Sakakeeny 2013). But the process also led me to listen closely to the way people speak. The musicians and others community members used words and phrases like 'hā' (breath) and 'reo' (voice), 'clearing the way', 'spearhead', 'safeguard' and 'going out' to describe the bands and what they do. These terms, like the bands' spiritual names, offered entry points for learning about elements of local belief and worldview, and about the distinctly Rātana significances and uses of the brass bands. In this way, incorporating the multiple voices helped to shape my research process and increase my understanding of the subject.

Brass bands in locales around the world are a growing area of interest in music scholarship, and further research is needed to bring out a range of perspectives from band members and community members about their own bands and music. An ethnographic approach incorporating multiple voices has potential to extend understandings of brass bands in postcolonial and other contemporary settings, particularly in regards to the localised meanings of the ensemble. This study contributes a contemporary ethnographic perspective about the Rātana brass tradition to the growing body of ethnomusicology literature about brass bands, in which New Zealand and Pacific Islands bands are under-represented (Boonzajer-Flaes 2000; Brucher & Reily 2013; Hebert 2008).

Concepts of community have been important in this exploration of Rātana brass bands. Taking heed of Kay Shelemay's (2011) call for closer investigation of the term 'community' in ethnomusicology, I have drawn on Rātana notions of community and banding. Members of Te Reo O Te Ārepa described their band and the collective of bands as a 'family' and a 'whānau', and Te Iwi Mōrehu as an iwi with shared faith. People spoke about the concept of kotahitanga as motivation for the founding of the brass bands and in relation to what the bands do for the Mōrehu in the present day. These distinctly Māori and Rātana notions—in which the brass bands were directly implicated by those I spoke with—are "insider perspectives that speak to the role of



musical processes in social bonding and their collective outcomes” (Shelemay 2011, 351). Ideas about Mōrehu unity under God across disparate geographic spaces and former tribal boundaries, as encapsulated in the ideal of kotahitanga, and the inclusivity and relationship emphasised by the metaphoric and literal uses of ‘whānau’ (Metge 1990) express the importance of togetherness and faith in the Mōrehu community. This study has explored some of the ways in which brass bands and music support faith, maintain a sense of identity and generate social connections within the large, geographically-spread, indigenous spiritual community of Te Iwi Mōrehu. The thesis contributes these specific perspectives to understandings of music’s role in shaping and sustaining social collectivities (Turino 1993, 2008; Shelemay 2011).

From my experiences in the Rātana Pā community, it became evident that the brass bands are just one part of a larger Mōrehu music scene involving dance bands, jazz bands, reggae bands, solo artists, and church choirs. But the musicians in the Reo do seem to occupy a special position: musical multi-taskers who, under different band names but in the same uniforms and with the same instruments, play liturgical music in church, play in a context of social and political interaction on the marae, play for healing and at tangi, and play for entertainment and fundraising. Their music is not just a soundtrack to but an integral aspect of many communal, poignant and celebratory moments.

The events described in this thesis have illustrated that, as well as being a recognisable emblem of the Rātana movement, the brass bands are an important chapter of Te Hāhi Rātana and are fundamentally linked with the shared spiritual beliefs that underpin Te Iwi Mōrehu. This study has been a first step for me in engaging with the Rātana community and brass bands, one that has identified some starting points for thinking about the bands within an ethnomusicological framework of music and community. There are many areas still to explore in relation to this longstanding brass tradition. Further research focusing on one or more of the other individual Reo in their locales around the country may contribute to a more in-depth understanding of these bands and their significance within the Mōrehu community and Rātana faith.

## **Closing Up**

‘Closing up’ is an important concept in Te Reo O Te Ārepa, with rehearsals, marches and other band activities being opened and closed with prayer. To close up this study I return to the bandroom in the Manuao at Rātana Pā, where I first met the members of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band at the beginning of the project, and where we carried out several research interviews and discussions.

After our two-hour interview, Mary and Desiree showed me a hand-painted plaque with the names of all the musicians who had traveled on the world tour of 1924 and 1925. Mary laughed, “two hours is too short! It’s been a lifetime, being in the Reo.” For me, her comment encapsulated the brevity of this research, and hinted at how much more there is to learn about the Rātana brass bands and the musicians within them who give life to brass voices. It seems fitting to end with a quote from Mary, the first female member of Te Reo O Te Ārepa, who spent more than forty years in the Reo: “Music will always be a part of this māramatanga.”

# Appendix One

## Compact Disc Contents

Page numbers refer to in-text references to CD tracks. Track 1 is an historic recording of poor quality. All other recordings were made during fieldwork, and some feature the sound of a drone-mounted camera in operation at the January 25<sup>th</sup> Hui.

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<b>CD Track 4</b>	Band commands given by former drum major of Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band and Ngā Reo, Gordon Ririnui, 14 September 2014 .....	82
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<b>CD Track 6</b>	Excerpt: Members of Ngā Reo in instrumental sections play Rātana March, mixing with haka and karanga on the marae. January 25 <sup>th</sup> Hui, 23 January 2015 .....	86
<b>CD Track 7</b>	Excerpt: Ngā Reo full marching order plays Rātana March, procession from marae to Temepara, January 25 <sup>th</sup> 2015 .....	88

## Appendix Two

### Table of Band Names and Blazer Colours

<b>Physical Name Establishment date</b>	<b>Spiritual Name in order of whakapapa</b>	<b>Namesake</b>	<b>Blazer</b>
Rātana Mōrehu Silver Band (Rātana Pā), 1932	Te Reo O Te Ārepa (The Voice of Alpha), post-1935	Te Ārepa Rātana, son of TW Rātana. Represents spiritual works	Dark blue with white trim
Mangakahia Mōrehu Brass Band, 1935	Te Reo O Te Ōmeka (The Voice of Omega), 1938	Te Ōmeka Rātana, son of TW Rātana. Represents physical works	Pale blue with white trim
Kaikohe Mōrehu Brass Band, 1934	Te Reo O Piri Wiri Tua (The Voice of the Campaigner), 1937	Piri Wiri Tua (TW Rātana during physical/political ministry). Represents political works	Dark green with gold trim
Hawke's Bay Mōrehu Brass Band, 1935	Te Reo O Hāmuera (The Voice of Samuel), 1939	Hāmuera, son of TW Rātana. Represents abolishment of tohungaism	Red with gold trim
Tauranga Mōrehu Brass Band, 1944	Te Reo O Rātana Te Tuatoru, 1945 (The Voice of the Third Rātana)	Matiu Rātana, the third member of the Rātana family to hold presidency of Rātana Church	Blue with white trim
Wellington Mōrehu Brass Band, 1980	Te Reo O Ngā Tuahine, 1982 (The Voice of the Sisters)	TW Rātana's daughters Te Reo Hura, Piki te Ora, and Rawinia	Purple with gold trim
Waipounamu Mōrehu Brass Band, 1984 (South Island)	Te Reo O Te Whaea O Katoa, 1986 (The Voice of the Mother of All)	Te Urumanao, TW Rātana's first wife	Yellow with pale blue trim

# Papakupu o Ngā Kupu Māori –

## Glossary of Māori terms

General definitions are based on Moorfield (2011). Rātana-specific definitions are given in italics, and are based on Anaru (1997a-d) and interview sources.

Transliterations are indicated by (translit.). Bands' spiritual names are not included in this glossary, but can be found translated in chapter two figures 2 and 3, and in appendix two.

Anahera Pono – *Faithful Angels*

āpotoro – apostle. *Minister of the Rātana Church*

ārepa – alpha

atua – god, supernatural being, ancestor with continuing influence (note that in many contexts Atua is also used for the Christian God, though not in the Rātana context).

āwhina – assistance, help. *Female members of the Rātana Church, sisters of mercy*

hā – breath, breathe

hāhi – church, religion

haka pōwhiri – ceremonial dance of welcome on marae

hapū – kinship group, subtribe

iwi – extended kinship group, tribe

kaikaranga – caller, woman or women who make ceremonial call to visitors on to marae

kaikōrero – speaker

kaiwaiata – singer

Kātipa – constable. *Rātana police officer*

kaupapa – plan, purpose

kaupapa Māori – Māori approach, ideology, principles

karanga – (n) formal or ceremonial call. (v) to call, summon

kauhau – sermon

kawenata – covenant

Kīngitanga – King Movement

koaea – choir

koata – quarter

koroneihana – coronation

kotahitanga – unity, togetherness, collective action. *Unity (of Māori) under Ihoa o Ngā Mano*

kura – school

kupu – word(s)

manaakitanga – hospitality

Māngai – mouth, spokesperson. *Divine Mouthpiece, spiritual name for TW Rātana*

Manuao – (translit.) Man ‘o’ war, warship. *Large communal building at Rātana Pā*

marae – courtyard, open area in front of meeting house where formal greetings and discussions take place, often includes complex of buildings around the marae  
marae ātea – public forum; open area in front of meeting house where formal welcomes and debates take place

marama – moon

māramatanga – enlightenment. *Teachings of the Rātana Church*

matua – parent, father. Also used a form of address for teachers.

Matua – *Holy Father*

Mōrehu – remnant, survivor. *Follower(s) of the Rātana faith*

ope – group

pā – village

pēne – (translit.) band

pōwhiri – (n) welcome, invitation, rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on to marae. (v) to welcome, invite, beckon

rātana – (translit.) lantern

rēwera – devil

reo – language, tongue, speech, voice.

tama – son, boy

Tama – *Son of God, Jesus Christ*

Te Hāhi Rātana – The Rātana Church

temepara – temple

Temepara Tapu o Ihoa – Sacred Temple of Jehovah

tohu – sign, symbol

tohunga – religious expert, healer, priest

Tumuaki – head, president. *President of the Rātana Church*

waiata – song

wairua – spirit, essence

Wairua Tapu – Holy Spirit

whā – four

whakaeke – arrival of guests, entrance

whakamoemiti – praise, thanks. *Prayers, church service*

whakapapa – (n) genealogy, descent. (v) To recite in proper order, to recite  
genealogies

whakapiki ora – *to heal, healing*

whaikōrero – (n) oratory, formal speech-making

whānau – extended family, family group

whetū – star

whetū marama tohu – star and moon symbol. *Main symbol of the Rātana Church,  
symbolising the five figures in the Rātana cosmology, and the enlightenment  
or māramatanga*

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Kama-Jane Leighton. Recorded Interview, September 2, 2014, Whanganui.

Mary Nepia and Desiree Docherty. Recorded Interview, September 13, 2014, Rātana Pā.

Ruia Aperahama. Recorded Interview, September 19, 2014, Auckland.

Tahupōtiki Pikimaui. Recorded Interviews, July 2, 2014 and September 27, 2014, Rātana Pā.

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