



On song: Te Kotahitanga Kapa Haka group perform with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and the Christchurch City Choir at Pasifika held at St Margaret's College.

Photo: IAIN MCGREGOR / FAIRFAX NZ

Performances inspiring and powerful

What a lineup. WHAT a lineup! Described as "A vibrant musical celebration of the heritage of our region"; and I am still vibrating.

It started with Te Kotahitanga Kapa Haka, in a selection of traditional Maori items, finely and vigorously presented. The contribution of Tihī Puanaki and her family cannot be underestimated in not only inspiring Te Kotahitanga Kapa Haka to remind us of our heritage but also to present it, through their compositions, as alive and progressive.

Two lovely arrangements of traditional New Zealand songs were beautifully presented by the combined choirs. Richard Oswin's *Sweet Sleep* was especially effective and led on to something quite different and, to me, unexpected.

The Shirley Boys' High School Pasifika Culture Group's Samoan Sasa and Slap Dances were not

REVIEW

Pasifika, presented by the Christchurch City Choir, with soloists Susan Densem and Helen Medlyn, The Burnside High School Senior Chorale, Te Kotahitanga Kapa Haka, Consortia of the University of Canterbury, Shirley Boys' High School Pasifika Culture Group and the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Withington.

Charles Luney Auditorium, St. Margaret's College, Saturday night, 27 September.

Reviewed by **The Press** music critic David Sell

only performed with skill and confidence, but were composed and choreographed by the boys



themselves and their tutor, Darryl Samuē.

To round off the first half of the concert, the Shirley boys were joined by the City Choir, Consortia and the percussion of the CSO in the Samoan *Le Masina E*.

The concept of David Hamilton's *Missa Pacifica*, which made up the rest of the concert, was fine. It was also admirably appropriate. There is some good music in it, and I would single out the second movement, *E hara i te mea* for

youth choir and orchestra, and Patricia Grace's *Whisper* to me as the gems of the work.

Overall, however, it missed more than it gave, and within itself was out of proportion. Space allows for just two examples. The opening chant, beautifully declaimed by Harikoa Bronsdaughter-George, should have been longer, and preferably backstage or side-stage; and the long duo, *Outing*, didn't seem to belong, its Singaporean text adding yet another dimension to a work that was already overloaded with concepts and cultures.

This was a bold concert for conductor Andrew Withington, who produces a strong clear sound from his choristers. My overall impression was of a combination of energy, refinement and a genuine cultural expression, powerful but never coarse. It was our music.