

# TU TANGATA 79

## The return of the Howard Morrison Quartet in an exciting show for an exciting future

There was some great television viewing on Sunday 7 October when TV1 presented highlights from the Tu Tangata 79 concert as its "Show of the Week". But even with all its technological resources, television could only hint at the magic of that evening in August when several thousand people of all ages and backgrounds came together at Ngaruawahia.

It was not merely a dazzling variety show with song, dance and laughter from some of the best-known names in New Zealand show business. There were 200 schoolchildren and two large cultural groups from Waikato and Te Arawa; there were an ex-Governor General, two cabinet ministers, several other politicians, the elders of Waikato and many other dignitaries from Maori and Pakeha life; there were TV technicians and cameramen, the Marae Committee, cooks, wardens, Maori Affairs staff and other workers; there were the proud parents and teachers of the children and all the other well-wishers who had paid up to \$20 each for their tickets. It was everybody's show.

It was the children's show in particular; not only those children taking part, but all those children in the future who stand to benefit from the Tu Tangata Trust Fund established from the proceeds of the evening.

### Chaos?

In the days and hours leading up to the concert, towers of scaffolding were erected in the Kimiora Hall and miles of cable were unwound to snake their way from lights, cameras and microphones to the central control room set up by TV1. The young children came on to the marae with their teachers, and soon well-drilled files of kids were moving back and forth across the lawn rehearsing their entries and exits. Poi and taiaha flashed wherever people could find a corner to practice. Mattresses were laid out, meals prepared. To an outsider it must have looked like chaos. But it all fell into place that Saturday evening, a vindication of some very hard work and careful planning, a demonstration of Maori talent and initiative.

### Triumph!

It was a triumph for Howard Morrison and his Quartet. It was their twenty-first anniversary in show business, but it was also an affirmation of their belief in Tu Tangata. Over the years since their retirement as a Quartet they have received many pleas to get together again, and they have been offered some staggering fees to do so. Apart from one concert in Christchurch four years ago they have never been interested. But this time it was different, and Howard echoed the feelings of all the performers when he said: "It's great to be together again, not only for nostalgic reasons but also to feel that we can contribute something positive for a cause we believe in."

*Left The concert starts — not with a roll of drums, not with a fanfare, but with the powerful, eerie call of the traditional putara.*

