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Introduction

Musicologists have increasingly used a wide-angled lens to study of music in society and explore how it is intertwined with issues of politics, gender, religion, race, psychology, memory, and space. Recent studies of music in connection with society take in a variety of musical phenomena from diverse periods and genres—medieval, classical, opera, rock, and so on. This book not only asks how music and society are, and have been, intertwined and mutually influential, but also examines the agents behind these connections: who determines musical cultures in society? Which social groups are represented in particular musical contexts? Which social groups are silenced or less well represented in music's histories, and why? This volume arose from a conference of the same title, a meeting of the New Zealand Musicological Society, which was held in Auckland, New Zealand in July 2020. Thus there is a strong emphasis on the Pacific. Its four parts explore, in order, cultural and cross-cultural agencies, agencies within vocal music, performance and agency, and agency regarding composition.

Part one, concerning cultural and cross-cultural agencies, is devoted to the Pacific. The first chapter, "The Year the Music Died," documents agency in the context of the diminution over two generations of almost an entire musical culture among the atoll community on Takū in Papua New Guinea. The author, Richard Moyle, has been involved with the community since 1994. In that time Takū has changed from a vibrant island community of 600 people, who sing and dance both contemporary and ancient creations for on average twenty hours each week, to a remnant of 150 residents, occasionally performing mostly imported material. Moyle charts the change from hundreds of locally composed songs boasting of fishing success to a small repertoire of love songs in another language; from long songs acknowledging the presence of ancestors and their help in everyday activities to short dance songs, highly repetitive in both lyrics and movements; from graveside songs forewarning spirits of the imminent arrival of a dead resident in the afterworld to songs asking an ancient foreign deity to comfort the living. He considers how aesthetics and networks of social relationships help define how Takū shape and sustain musical standards, and how they categorize themselves in various sacred and secular circumstances, in and

outside the island's ritual arena. Such agency gradually brought about changes in the performing arts and society itself.

Using contemporary newspapers and ephemera collections, Sandra Crawshaw explores the agents responsible for building up His Majesty's Theatre in Dunedin, New Zealand, as a major cultural institution in the early part of the twentieth century and "one of the finest and best-appointed theatres in the colonies." Until John Mansfield Thomson's *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music* was published in 1991, very little had been written about the early days of New Zealand's musical culture. With an "overseas is better" attitude, New Zealanders' agency within music history was often overlooked. In recent years, research has revealed that the cultural and musical life in New Zealand from colonial times onwards was a lot richer and more varied than was previously believed. Many recent studies have focused upon institutions such as New Zealand's national and regional orchestras, chamber music societies, and choral and opera activities, telling fascinating stories of their struggles to become established. His Majesty's Theatre had its beginnings in the agricultural sector, starting life in 1896 as the Agricultural Hall. Funded privately by a group of businessmen and gentlemen farmers, who then took a gamble on the vision of entrepreneur J. C. Williamson, the hall was lavishly refurbished and renamed in 1902. Williamson's wealth and innate business sense gave him influence over what New Zealand audiences came to see, and the new, up-to-date His Majesty's Theatre extended his reach.

The theme of who gets to speak on behalf of a culture is taken up in Gregory Camp's "'In the Tiki Tiki Tiki Tiki Tiki Room: Musicalizing the South Pacific in Disney's Theme Parks." The Walt Disney Company has frequently used the South Pacific as a setting for its various films, television shows, and theme parks. Its use of music in these texts marks the company's attitude (and the attitude they construct for their global audiences) towards the region. Camp examines Disney's construction of South Pacific music in its theme parks as a reflection of the societies in which they operate. In the 1950s and '60s Disney capitalized on the Tiki craze of the time by designing Disneyland's Adventureland largely around American ideas of the "exotic" South Pacific and its music, with attractions ranging from the mostly fictitious version of Pacific music heard in the Enchanted Tiki Room to the somewhat more authentic constructions in the Tahitian Terrace restaurant's floor show (and, later, the similar luau show at Walt Disney World's Polynesian Village Resort). While in more recent Disney films such as *Lilo & Stitch* (2002) and *Moana* (2016) the company has attempted to convey a Pacific soundscape grounded in local musics, giving agency to the

people whose stories are told, the theme parks have largely retained their mid-century exoticism. This disconnect between the parks and the films shows this massive multinational corporation caught between nostalgia for '50s pop culture and a desire for authenticity, trying to speak and sing both to and for people in multiple societies around the world.

Part 2 shifts attention from the Pacific to Europe and from the twentieth century to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In "Figaro Transmuted through the Agency of Neapolitan Creatives: Niccolò Piccinni's *La serva onorata*," Lawrence Mays discusses how Giambattista Lorenzi and composer Niccolò Piccinni exerted agency. The libretto for *La serva onorata*, premiered in Naples in 1792, is a substantially reworked version of Lorenzo Da Ponte's *Le nozze di Figaro*, which premiered in Vienna in 1786. The Neapolitan king and queen had much contact with Da Ponte in Vienna, and it is likely that they offered his libretto to a local theatre. Lorenzi's engagement to recast the imported text was consistent with the preference of impresarios to employ librettists who knew Neapolitan taste, customs, and dialect. Influences on the authors' creative choices included the expectations of theatre management, performers, and audiences. Although Lorenzi's libretto draws heavily on Da Ponte's, with many points of concurrence and some nearly identical wording, new elements are added and the overall tone is more farcical and at times vulgar, consistent with local preference. Piccinni demonstrates his ability to meld eclectic influences within a circumscribed environment. Mays explores how the librettist and composer, both in the final phases of successful careers, translated a known opera for a particular theatrical milieu. Its enthusiastic reception in Naples was a testament to their artistic choices under various constraints and influences.

Allan Badley takes the setting to Vienna with his "Leopold Koželuh's Masonic Cantata *Joseph der Menschheit Segen* and Josephinism," which discusses how freemasonry affected agency. On 1 September 1783, Koželuh's *Joseph der Menschheit Segen* was performed in Vienna for the first and possibly only time in a ceremony of thanksgiving organized by the Zu den drei Adlern, Zur gekrönten Hoffnung, and Zur Beständigkeit lodges. The early 1780s was a golden age for freemasonry in Vienna. Initially Emperor Joseph II approved of the many practical ways in which the craft involved itself in the education and welfare of the poor. But by 1785 he had become sufficiently alarmed by the rapid growth of freemasonry throughout the Habsburg lands to publish a patent that demanded its radical reorganization; this led to a sharp decline in lodge membership during the late 1780s and increasing suspicion of the movement in general after the outbreak of the French Revolution. This chapter considers *Joseph der Menschheit*

Segen in the context of Habsburg imperial politics of the 1780s and their impact on society, and also examines the incorporation of masonic symbolism in both Leopold Föderl's libretto and Koželuh's score. The composer's arrangement of the work for voices and fortepiano, published in Vienna by Torricella in December 1784, took the work to a wider public, and its handsomely engraved title page includes many masonic symbols that even non-masons would have recognized. To what extent Koželuh endorsed the sentiments expressed in the work is unknown, but the care with which he treated certain aspects of masonic symbolism suggests that he was sincere in his commitment to the craft, and belief in its value as an agent of societal change.

Arrangements of musical works offer a fascinating field for exploring matters of agency within musical culture. Nancy November's chapter "Agency, Politics, and Opera Arrangements in Fanny Arnstein's Salons" stays within the context of Vienna but now in the early nineteenth century, when arrangements of public music flourished in great variety in that city. She asks: what does this culture of musical arrangements tell us about shifting musical and social values and agency in this period, especially as they concern women? Focusing on Fanny von Arnstein in particular, she considers how arrangements offered amateurs agency in terms of education, entertainment, and sociability in the home, and a bridge to public music-making. This was particularly valuable to female amateurs, who otherwise had little say or share in the public spheres of composition, criticism, and orchestral performance. Even when it seemed to offer sheer entertainment or straightforward escapism, private sphere music-making also helped to define musicians' sense of freedom—a freedom of choice regarding what they heard, where they heard it, and how. Here we can already speak of a cultivation of agency, understood as simple autonomy; but arrangements could also assist those who otherwise had no "voice" in the public sphere with talking politics. The chapter zooms in on a salon hosted by Arnstein in which the programming choices, as well as the performance of arrangements, spoke subtly against the politics of Emperor Francis I, implying a perception of him a tyrannical dictator.

Part 3 moves to the topic of performance and agency. Anner Bylsma described the interpretative process used in Historically Informed Performance (HIP) as "Aladdin rubbing his lamp": serendipitous discovery with little to do with historical correctness. In "Reflections on Aladdin's Lamp: Creative Practice Research in-and-through Historically Informed Performance," Imogen Morris explores this process further, with the goal of developing a theoretical framework for conducting Creative Practice Research (CPR)

in-and-through HIP. In such research, the agency of the performer-researcher is vital to the research process, allowing the creative practice and insights of the HIP musician—previously considered too subjective to constitute scholarly knowledge—to be recognized and used as valid sources of evidence. She explores the ways performers assimilate historical information into their playing and overcome gaps in scholarly knowledge. The findings reveal that the performer's experience, expertise, and intuition are integral to transforming historical evidence into a convincing performance that moves the emotions of a modern-day audience. This conclusion leads to a concept of "artistic values" in this context: principles that guide how a performer interprets, filters, and even manipulates historical information in their decision-making process.

Artistic decision-making is the subject of Christopher McRae's "When Your Heart is Set on Both Broadway and the Met: An Exploration of Vocal Technique in Contemporary Musical Theater"—this time with regard to contemporary vocal music. Singers today are expected to be able to perform a wide range of repertoire. This is especially true of musical theatre singers, where the array of potential vocal approaches to the repertoire is vast and a singer's vocal choices become a crucial part of performance. The malleability required to widen these choices, along with vocal health and longevity, is important for sustaining a career in musical theatre. Since the integration of the microphone into musical theatre, singers' agency has greatly increased, with a wider palette of viable vocal styles to choose from, using both classical and contemporary paradigms of singing. Current literature on vocal technique tends to focus on only one of these vocal paradigms at a time; few studies explore the crossover of the two. This chapter examines how crossover of vocal choices is achieved and to what the effect. Analyzing the work of notable sopranos Kristin Chenoweth, Audra McDonald, and Kelli O'Hara, all of whom integrate classical vocal choices into contemporary singing, McRae explore the efficacy of stylistic crossover.

Part 4 addresses the agency of composers. While the broad appeal of Benjamin Britten's music did wonders for his popularity with the listening public, his eclectic fusion of "high" modernist elements and more familiar "populist" elements made his work an easy target for the twentieth century's aesthetic purists. Eliana Dunford considers his uneasy agency in "Ratner's *Topoi* and the Cultural Middlebrow in Britten's First Suite for Cello." For Theodor Adorno, Britten was emblematic of a generation of composers who had "adjusted to mass culture by means of calculated feeble-mindedness," thus surrendering their compositional agency. Commentators such as Clement Greenberg derided Britten's works as counterfeits (albeit highly skillful) of authentic modernist writing. Dunford

argues that rather than representing a duplicitous betrayal of modernism's ideals, Britten's synthesis of "high" and "low" elements is a reflection of a growing "middlebrow" culture in postwar Britain.

The context returns to New Zealand in Celeste Oram's "Provincializing Practice: Agency and Positionality in Cross-Cultural Music in Aotearoa New Zealand." Oram surveys and expands some critical tools that contribute to discourse on the fast-growing genre of art music in New Zealand involving classically trained musicians performing together with taonga pūoro (traditional Māori musical instruments) musicians. While Oram's own creative work in this genre has necessitated learning about taonga pūoro, it has equally compelled her to deepen her critical engagement with the Eurological cultures whose influence she regularly negotiates as a composer. Her method departs from recent musicology's focus on high-profile cross-cultural works, looking instead to ecologies of practice. In particular, she argues that, especially in cross-cultural settings, such moments of practice are inevitably compromised and contradictory. So the value of critical reflection on one's own practice is not in defending or exonerating one's creative decisions, but rather in accounting frankly for one's complex positionality as a postcolonial agent.

Nancy November

Part One

Cultural and Cross-Cultural Agencies

The Year the Music Died: Agency in the Context of Demise on Takū, Papua New Guinea

Richard Moyle

In the context of music, agency can influence the mundane and the extraordinary, the secular and the sacred, as individuals and institutions shape their identities while acting within determined social and cultural frameworks. In ethnomusicology, agency can, for example, impact a single dance genre over a broad geographical area,[1] be a political tool within a study of musical beauty or shape the aesthetics of lyric expressivity,[2] and survey an entire nation.[3] Thomas Turino reflects on the agency of individuals[4] and Jeff Todd Titon, providing a broad summary of the term, parses the data by placing it under the heading "the ethnomusicology of,"[5] much in the way that Merriam introduced the phrase "the anthropology of" half a century earlier in order to characterize a particular research process in his own studies of "music in culture."[6]

1 Michael Iyanaga, "Why Saints Love Samba: A Historical Perspective on Black Agency and the Rearticulation of Catholicism in Bahia, Brazil," *Black Music Research Journal* 35 (2015): 119–147.

2 Barry Shank, "The Political Agency of Musical Beauty," *American Quarterly* 63 (2011): 831–855; Robert Kauffman, "Lyric's Expression: Musicality, Conceptuality, Critical Agency," *Cultural Critique* 60 (2005): 197–216.

3 Bode Omojola, *Yorùbá Music in the Twentieth Century: Identity, Agency, and Performance Practice* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014).

4 Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

5 Jeff Todd Titon, "Music, the Public Interest, and the Practice of Ethnomusicology," *Ethnomusicology* 36 (1992): 315–322.

6 Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964); idem, *Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians* (New York: Wenner-Green Foundation for Anthropological Research, 1967).

Using Alfred Gell's definition of agency[7]—a point where the potentially infinite chain of causality is broken and a "beginning" is attributed to a certain entity—it is possible to posit the obverse: just as any change has a forward-looking "first" (or presence), it also has a backward-looking "last" (or absence). It is probably true that, as a matter of course, most ethnomusicological studies mention or analyze the growth and/or decline of specific genres within a culture; and, indeed, the notion of musical life as a static and finite entity "out there" to be "discovered" has been largely overtaken by the view that musical output is a malleable, adaptive entity reflecting the social and cultural agencies that create and sustain it. In Titon's words, it is "shifting, situational and humanly."[8]

Of course, the impact of influential individuals is inversely proportional to the numbers of people under study, and population size also affects the feasibility of attributing performative "firsts" and "lasts" based on direct observation or indirect confirmation. Regardless of the constraints of time and resources, and the size of "the field," as ethnomusicologists we are sometimes faced with the temptation to extrapolate. From our direct experiences and observations, we may ascribe to people un-met and locations un-visited the same musical preferences and practices, attitudes and actions found elsewhere in the community, region, or country as those comprising our empirical data set. It is rare indeed to have extended access to an entire community that is distinguished linguistically and culturally and separated geographically and identifiable musically from its neighbors—a community large enough to be genealogically sustainable, but small enough to be directly observable much of the time; a community agreeable enough not just to tolerate an endlessly inquisitive outsider for month after month, year after year for almost two generations, but also to actively support, in both principle and practice, a research programmed resulting in four books at their own specific request.[9] This chapter examines musical agency at work in such a community—Takū, in Papua New Guinea—which has a population size that accommodates generalizations, particularly first times and last times, because they are directly observable.

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7 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 63.

8 Titon, "Music, the Public Interest, and the Practice of Ethnomusicology," 319.

9 See for example, Richard M. Moyle, *Nā Kkai—Takū Musical Fables* (Boroko: Institute for Papua New Guinea Studies, 2004); idem, *Songs from The Second Float / A Musical Ethnography of Takū Atoll, Papua New Guinea*, Pacific Islands Monograph Series 21 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Center for Pacific Island Studies, 2007); idem, *A Dictionary of Takuu* (Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 2011); and idem, *Takū Ritual and Belief. Polynesian Religion in Practice* (Adelaide: Crawford House Publishing, 2018).

Elsewhere, I have detailed Takū's checkered history and a population varying wildly within the last two hundred years—from as few as eleven to as many as eight hundred.[10] I have also documented the extraordinary musical output of the adult population, during my fieldwork years, of approximately one hundred and fifty;[11] and how I stopped recording after one thousand songs and shifted towards learning and participating—moving from a passive audience member to an (albeit hesitant) performer, a change that was encouraged and supported.

On any musical occasion, individual Takū may choose to perform or abstain, and thus occupy the category of performer or audience. However, this rather crude division fails to take into account the influence of identity and personality, and creates potential conflicts of interest that arise from numerous coexisting interpersonal relationships and the wishes and expectations of parties in those relationships. Not all performers, for example, may participate happily, willingly, or satisfactorily,[12] and not all audience members are necessarily comfortable being simply passive observers. Putting aside the semantic difficulties of examining performance without an audience, and vice versa, all the personnel present are there as a result of a multiplicity of self-identities and agencies. The situation extends both backward and forward in time, affecting prior acts of creation and learning, as well as future acts of reception and recollection. Much of what occurs, and when and with whom, depends on social linkages.

After compiling and revising genealogies over several years, it became clear to me that most Takū were connected to as many as 30% of the entire community by a number of relationship webs, which, while maintained, were weighted at different times according to different obligations and expectations. Such connections occurred:

- Directly and frequently, with consanguineal kin supplying labour and consumables (fish, garden produce).
- Indirectly but frequently, with affinal kin supplying consumables (fish, garden produce).
- Directly but occasionally, with a single younger community member in a relationship of lifelong guardianship (supplying food, clothing, cash).

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10 See Moyle, *Songs from The Second Float* and *Takū Ritual and Belief*.

11 I spent most summers on the Polynesian-speaking island (whose language is also called Takū) between 1994 and 2010, when regular shipping stopped, and have maintained contact through social media for the past twelve years.

12 A situation Turino calls "participatory consent" in *Music as Social Life*, 77.

- Directly and frequently with one's fellow clan members, supplying labor and expertise.
- Directly but infrequently with one's clan elder, supplying labor at rituals.
- Directly but infrequently with one's grand-patrilineal kin, to decide the exchange of goods following a death or a bride-wealth presentation.
- Directly but infrequently with one's bilateral kin at a bride-wealth presentation or during the five-day tukumai (grief removal) ritual.[13]

Through such context-dependent means, Takū represent themselves to others both inside and outside their immediate circles of membership.

Only in song lyrics does a Takū resident publicly proclaim himself (the situation is confined to adult males) as an independent individual: for example, in lyrics such as "I returned with my catch of two hundred" and "Sini used the ocean as his garden." And only in song conveyed by a medium does the spirit of a dead individual resident identify themself by name: for example, "Hotu walked alone into the bush in the sacred wind, dancing at dawn" and "[A]s the school

FIGURE 1. Takū's assembled community during day two of a tukumai ritual. *Photograph: Richard Moyle*

13 See Moyle, "Te Tukumai—Ending the Grief," Vimeo Video, 17:37, June 10, 2015, https://vimeo.com/130386785.

of tuna arrived beyond the channel, Haite's spirit accompanied it."[14] Such self-identifications reflect, in part, Takū aesthetic principles.

The Takū sense of musical aesthetics varies according to song genre, date of composition, and composer. In former times, spirit-originating dance songs, for example, were intended for performance over more than one generation. Moreover, the composer's association (through affiliation) with one of the community's five clans made such songs into precise statements of individual and clan identity required when performing a tukumai ritual for a recently deceased fellow clansperson.[15] Most of these songs—which are still performed—are of the *sau* women's dance genre. Two afternoons of the ritual are devoted to such performances, where personal interpretation is not a local concept: emphasis is on faithfulness to the musical artefact: it must be correct in melody and lyrics, all uttered in unison, and accurate in the synchrony of its dance movements (or roundly criticized if these are absent). An additional reason for close attention to perfection of detail is the unseen, but believed, presence at the performance venue of ancestor spirits; while they are attracted by the sights and sounds, they are also able to inflict punishment on an errant singer or dancer. Indeed, for this reason dancers wear protective amulets. Each song, and each section within each song, has a unique melody.

In contrast, songs composed by the living emphasize—within local conventions—lyric and melodic originality. Most compositions of this kind are *tuki* songs—songs that praise a dead individual and are first performed at the tukumai ritual several months after the death. Until the 1990s, each of the five clans had a patrilineally defined *purotu*—male performance specialist—responsible for both leading the performance of items already in the repertoire and creating new ones on demand. Until the decline of the genre itself two decades later, the deceased's clan and the wider community expected each new tuki to be original, again with an established framework of structure and singing style. Of course, such an arrangement depends on an intergenerational supply of creative sons, and the apparent rigidity of this arrangement proved a weakness as the numbers of purotu declined from five in the 1970s to just one in the 1990s. Understandably, when I visited in the 1990s, the 1970s were regarded by many adults as a kind of golden age for the performing arts.

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14 See Moyle, *Songs from The Second Float*, chapter 5.

15 Richard M. Moyle, "Keeping It in the family: Ancestral Talkback on Takū," in *Spirit Possession and Communication in Religious and Cultural Contexts*, ed. Caroline Blyth (Oxford: Routledge, 2020), 119–134.

Figure 2. Women dancing a *sau*.
Photograph: Richard Moyle

Tuki song lyrics are intended *ki ahu te tautai* (to praise the master-fisherman) for his exploits in catching *ika tau* (prestige fish), such as pelagic shark, oilfish, and tuna, which in turn depend on the availability of nine-meter ocean-going canoes. Canoe carvers and users combine their skills and experience to provide the island's staple diet of fish, and both categories of men are recognized in tuki songs and routinely praised to the point where history morphs into acceptably loving exaggeration.[16] In the absence of any purotu specialist since 1993, tuki melodies and lyrical phrases became formulaic compositions delegated to less creative clan members. Further reflecting the aesthetic preference for musical novelty, a singing group will attract private criticism if it merely composes new lyrics for an already existing melody.

The island's population peaked in the 1990s during a ten-year civil war when several hundred Takū were forced to return from working on Bougainville Island. All the available housing was filled by almost seven hundred people, but the sea was bountiful enough to feed everyone. Canoe-building intensified, and the two building yards echoed daily with the sound of adzes as drift logs were

16 Richard M. Moyle, "Celebrating and Enhancing a Virtual Past through Singing: The Polynesian Community on Takū," in *Performing History: Approaches to History across Musicology*, ed. Nancy November (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020), 101–114.

made into hulls and older craft and their gear were repaired. But there were no more remittances from family members working on Bougainville, and local supplies of imported cloth, food, and fishing gear soon ran out.

From around 1996, former Bougainville workers left the island with their families to seek work elsewhere in Papua New Guinea—and few ever returned. Some of those who left were proficient in the large-scale dances each clan owned; others were in line to inherit the dances. Around two hundred people went to find work elsewhere in the country before the new millennium. These developments, as well as the absence of regular shipping in the previous ten years and consequent lack of European food, fishing gear, medicine, and clothing, prompted some expatriate Takū to charter small cargo boats and take away entire families. Most resettled two hundred kilometers away in ad hoc communities near Buka, North Bougainville, where they remain, in less than ideal living conditions.

It has been possible to observe a steady stream of last performances of large-scale dances, which are distinctive in that the formations constitute straight lines and adhere to the following strict protocols: hereditary personal ownership, hereditary dance line leaders, and performances lasting more than twenty minutes. Although these ancient dances were brought to the island and taught by ancestral spirits, and although their performance was maintained to ensure those spirits remained happy and well disposed, all of them were discontinued on the then-owner's death because the rightful next owners—whose presiding presence was a necessary condition—were either untrained or permanently off-island.

Performance of women's *sau* dances, in particular, which are spirit-composed and communicated via a medium, depended on the supportive presence of a small group of elderly women singers, since younger women showed little enthusiasm for participation and no tuition was offered. As progressively fewer knowledgeable women remained on the island, *sau* performance was shortened to a few sections known to the remaining singers, and, as numbers of singers continued to drop, confined to fewer and fewer individual dances.

The tukumai ritual incorporated more than thirty hours of singing and dancing, but by 2006 there were simply not enough people to sustain this duration; and the numbers of new songs composed for the dead declined, while reliance

FIGURE 3. Senior women singing to accompany a sau dance.
Photograph: Richard Moyle

on the use of existing melodies and stock poetic phrases increased. All of these events are best represented in a timeline:[17]

Year	Event	Population
Fifteenth century (twenty generations of people and three generations of spirits)	The atoll was raised from the ocean and colonized by ancestor spirits; intermarriage with humans produced the first human generations.	c. 20
1616	First European sighting (by Abel Tasman).	unknown

17 Details of the events in the table are summarized in Moyle, *Songs from The Second Float*, chapter 1.

1795	(Re)discovery of island by James Mortlock, who named it after himself.	unknown
1843	A reported clash with an American ship harvesting sea cucumbers killed one crew and three Takū. The event was captured in a dance song still popular one hundred and fifty years later.	unknown
1850–60	Foreign ships avoid the island after false rumors of cannibalism.	unknown
1870s	The *ariki* (paramount chief) had no children, so he nominated his adopted son (he had survived drifting from distant Nukumanu Island) as the next titleholder. It is widely believed that that ariki possessed a limited knowledge of Takū ritual procedures and that some lapsed as a result.	n/a
1880s	Smallpox was accidently introduced and the population reduced to a mere twelve.	12
1886	The island was unwittingly sold to a foreigner, Emma Forsayth; foreign plantation workers were introduced; and the indigenous population forcibly relocated to longhouses on a small islet for forty-five years. Some rituals ceased.	unknown
1928	Nukutoa Island on the atoll was bought by an expatriate copra trader, and the population relocated there under conditions favorable to cultural practices and rapid population growth.	110
1928–1961	The sources for an extensive set of population figures appear in Moyle, *Songs from the Second Float / A Musical Ethnography of Takū Atoll, Papua New Guinea*, 19.	110–385

Then followed a further unprecedented event, occurring within living memory and having equally major ramifications:

1963	The first known death off-island of an ariki (from smallpox, on Bougainville Island), creating dread and fear and leading to a temporary breakdown of social order until a regent was appointed.	385