

# waiata

## MĀORI MUSIC AWARDS



### Taisha returns for this year's National Waiata Maori Music Awards

*August 17- 2020*

Returning home to New Zealand just before lockdown is proving to be the right decision for award-winning singer, Taisha Tari.

Two new albums and an initiative to help rangatahi into music careers are in the pipeline for the performer who spent the past couple years across the ditch in Australia.

“Last year I released a few singles for an album called [Tears Of Hope](#) but I’m looking to launch the whole album for Māori Music Month, which we’re in now, as an EP, with seven songs.

“Tears Of Hope is a bi-lingual, English and Māori album, and I’m also working on an acoustic solo album, that’s about 90 per cent finished and I’ll be putting that out later this year too.”

Taisha (pictured above) is one of the ambassadors for the [National Waiata Māori Music Awards](#), which every year runs [Te Marama Pūoro Waiata Māori - Māori Music Month](#) in August.

She won the Best Māori Female Solo Artist and Best Māori Song titles at the inaugural Waiata awards in 2008 and has performed on television and extensively toured in Australia, Europe and the US.

Taisha, Ngati Kahungunu and Ngapuhi, said Māori Music Month is the perfect time to celebrate Māori artists and to think about the value music plays in a post Covid-19 world.

“I know the pandemic has been a shock to the music industry but music has a way of making it through, it has a beautiful way of bubbling to the surface.

“It’s not seen as essential but in many ways music is, because it has the ability to uplift people.”

Adjusting to life in New Zealand has presented an opportunity to become involved in Māori youth, to work as a mentor and a guide for those starting out in their music or entertainment careers.

“The pathway I’m on is around learning te reo Māori through music and I thought there’s a lot of young people out there who don’t know how to speak our language.

“So why not put them in the same waka as me and see if they are having similar challenges around learning te reo and explore how I can help them through music.

“It’s about having the courage to learn, being slightly uncomfortable but not being scared to give it a go.”

She wants to work one-on-one with aspiring young Māori musicians and is looking at setting up a two-day wananga to give them a taste of the music industry.

It could involve asking rangatahi to send in their original work and from there selecting eight for the course, based in Auckland, where Taisha lives.

“There are so many talented young singers out there but they’re all very much operating in the online world and aren’t getting that personal contact with musicians to learn.

“For the wananga I’m planning, I’d like to spend the first day with our eight rangatahi, focussing on writing waiata and working towards a song from each of them.

“On the second day, we’ll work in a professional music studio where they will learn the fundamentals of how to record a song, sharing tips that I have learnt over the years.

“And then we’ll move on to recording a waiata at the end of day two.”

Mentoring the next generation is important to Taisha and it is also one of the goals of Te Marama Pūoro Waiata Māori - Māori Music Month in August.

“I was lucky because I did get that kind of help when I was young.

“I was super shy but I was grateful I had people, other musicians, who reached out to help and so I must do the same.”

Taisha has also continued performing live and since returning to New Zealand.

She has reconnected with some well-known entertainers, including Tina Cross, and the two perform together as “Wicked Wahine”, something they started about four years ago.

The recent changes in Covid-19 alert levels, level 3 for Auckland and level 2 for the rest of the country, has forced some changes to gigs Taisha had planned to perform in.

But she hopes she'll be able to get back on stage to sing and perform with other friends and well-known entertainers as soon as it is safe.

“Why wouldn't you want to sing with your mates? Singing to me is joyful, I do it because I love it and for no other reason.”

Taisha will also share her love for singing and performing live when she appears at this year's National Waiata Māori Music Awards, which will be held at Toitōi - Hawke's Bay Arts and Events Centre, on October 2.

### **National Waiata Maori Music Awards 2020**

The National Waiata Māori Music Awards seeks to develop, encourage and honour the achievements of outstanding traditional and contemporary musical compositions and performances annually. This is the most prestigious music awards event to acknowledge our Māori composers.

#### **Important dates:**

August: Te Marama Pūoro Waiata Māori - Māori Music Month

August 1: Nominations open for National Waiata Māori Music Awards.

August 31: Nominations close.

September 17: Finalists announced.

October 1: Waiata Māori Music Awards Conference.

October 2: Winners announced at the National Waiata Māori Music Awards gala event.

#### **Notes for artists:**

Full Terms and Conditions for the 2020 event can be found on the Waiata Māori Music Awards website: <https://www.waiatamaoriawards.co.nz/>

For any questions regarding the nominations process please contact Grace Leota:

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