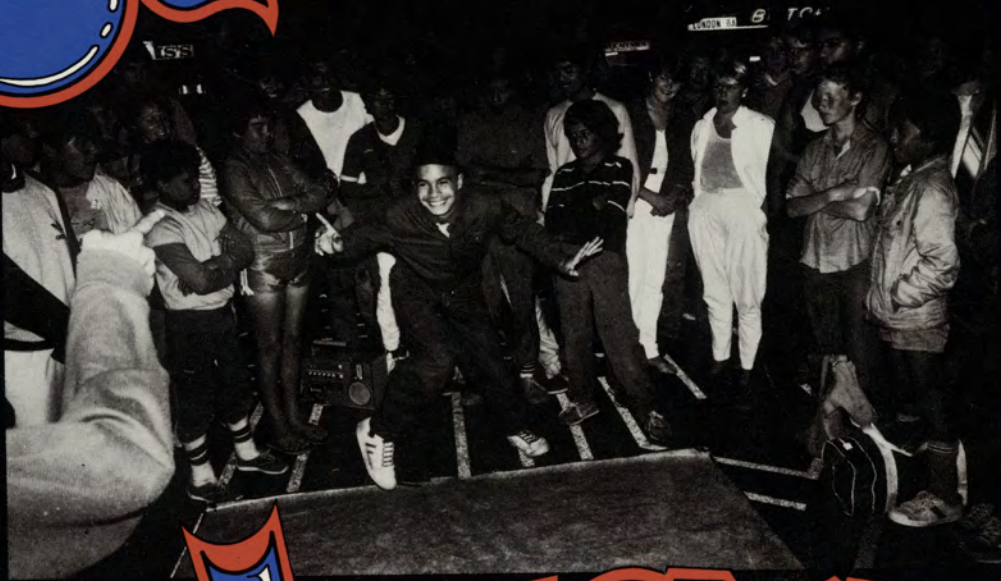


▲ BREAK

▲ BOMBING

# Street Action



# Adventuro

BY MARK SCOTT PHOTOS BY PETER BLACK

If you think break-dance is just some kids doing a dance in the street, if you think bombing is just some scrappy graffiti then STREET-ACTION AOTEAROA is going to make you think again. Think hard.

Sure, STREET-ACTION AOTEAROA gives the dance tips, the street-art tips but it's much more than that. STREET-ACTION AOTEAROA tells a tough story — tells what's behind the glue, the 1984 Youth Riot, behind the struggle of our kids to walk tall. It's their pain. It's their story.

STREET-ACTION AOTEAROA tells the story because no-one else has bothered to even listen — the story will shock but if you walk away angry you got it wrong.

STREET-ACTION AOTEAROA is about love, about our future. If you live in Aotearoa you got to read it.

## THANKS:

### PRODUCTION

I want to thank Brian Moss and Martin Taylor who designed Chapter One and who helped at the early stages of the project without payment for time. I designed the rest of the book and it certainly shows. Thanks for your support.

The photos were taken with the assistance of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and I'd like to add a special thanks for the photographer, Peter Black, who went way beyond simply providing the photos. He provided personal and technical support through his belief in the kids and in this book.

Special thanks also to Ralph Paine and Ian McNee who did the front cover from an original idea by Marcus Hohaia, Orakei Primary; to Gil Hanly who took the bombing photographs at short notice; to Smooth Inc. for doing the back cover and to Gary Davis for his inspired bop drawing.

In fact, without the voluntary and committed support of many people this book would not have surfaced. Thanks again to you all.

Finally I'd like to thank the New Zealand Lottery Board for their generous assistance in bringing the cost of the book down to a level affordable for the kids.

### PERSONAL

It's impossible to thank all the people who kept me strong through the difficulties in getting this book out but I'd like to specially thank Vivienne Wigby, Don Selwyn, Feleti Ngan-Woo, Dalvanus, Simon Shepherd, Mahia Fuimaono and all the people of Arohanui Incorporated.

For my own personal reasons I want to give thanks to the Falanitule family who over many years have taken me in as one of their own.

I want also to give thanks to Whatarau Wharehoka — the love he gave me as a child at Parihaka is with me now.

Final thanks I reserve for Luisa Falanitule, she is the backstop for this book.

Thanks, MARK SCOTT.

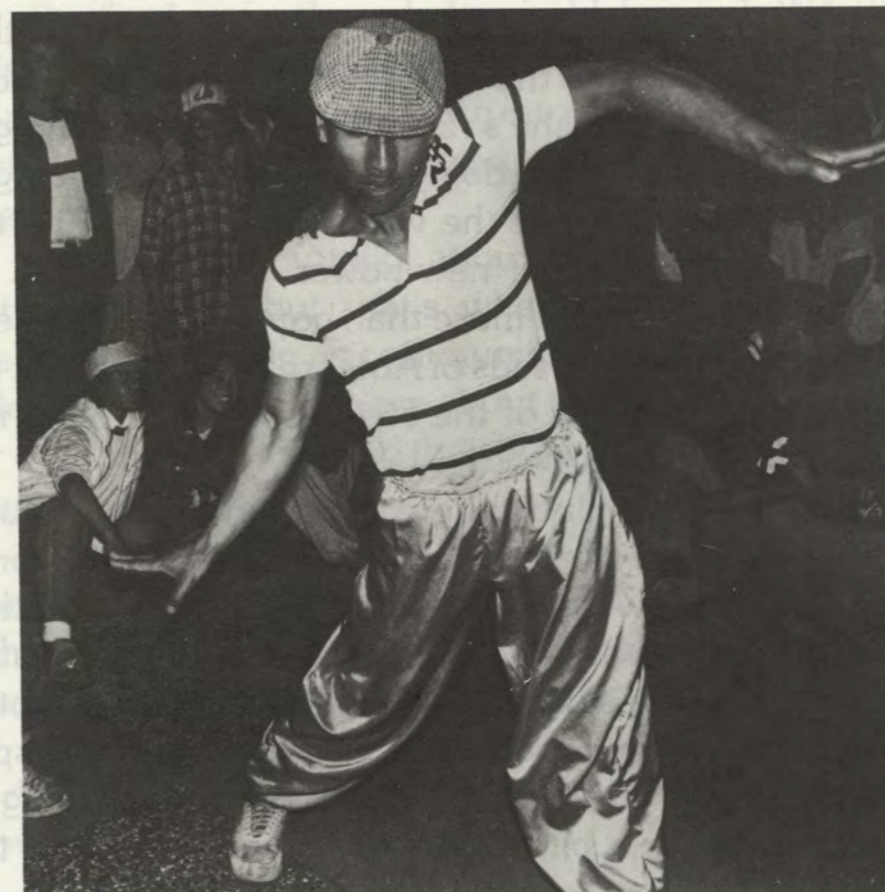
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# DEDICATION

TO THE TIPUNA OF ALL  
POLYNESIA AND THEIR SPIRIT  
... TO THE YOUNG KIDS OF  
TODAY WHO KEEP THAT SPIRIT  
ALIVE WITH THEIR DANCE.



THE STREET IS MY MARAE,  
MY WALKMAN MY MANA,  
MY BOP MY BLANKET,  
KEEPS ME WARM . . . bopper's letter to Dalvanus.

# INTRODUCTION - INTRODUCTION - INTRODUCTION - INTRO

There's this girl and like so many of our young she used to slop about the place with her head down . . . like she'd lost her heart and was looking for it. But now there she is right out on the street in the middle of town. Nowhere town. And she's raising her hand, stretching out with her body and she's doing her dance. She's doing her bop . . . stretching out the wairua inside her. There's a smile on her face — her new power. The thrill of it.

This book is about more than bop or break-dance, it's about all the forgotten kids of Aotearoa and their fight for a place in the Polynesia of the 80s. Bop is their fight, it's a fight for a new future.

This book is a place where those kids tell how much it hurts to be slapped hard in the face from two directions at once. Tell of how they feel rejected by their traditional cultures and of the sense of failure dished out by mainstream white society. Tell of how they feel forgotten.

But above all this book is a place where our kids speak of their hope . . . their dance does most of the talking and we should all do a bit of listening because through their dance our kids are pointing to a future for this land — of love and energy, of dancing in the streets. Aotearoa.

A few things . . . when I say the forgotten kids I don't just mean the obvious — the kids living in the street, the glue sniffers — I mean all those kids out there whose special Polynesian quality of love . . . arohanui . . . has no place to go, is given the cold shoulder.

By that I mean the pakeha world demands that those kids surrender their arohanui, their wairua to pakeha ideas of success, that they turn into pakehas. It's a special sort of pain and our kids have taken their fight to the street with their dance.

And everybody talks about the street like it was a dirty word . . . but that's where we should all be — breathing life, living as community. Another dirty word is video parlours but they are about the only meeting places for our forgotten kids and they brought our kids out, drew them together.

Polynesian means in this book Maori, Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, Tokelauan and Cook Islander . . . although we pakehas were born in Polynesia I believe we have yet to earn the right to be named after our birthplace.

Another thing . . . bop is divided into two main forms of dance — break, spinning on the ground and bop, body moves.

Just as I finished writing this book a bopper I know rang me with a beautiful surprise — final proof of the spirit I knew was inside bop. That bopper had found his place . . . the surprise is tacked on to the end of the book, but read the book first, that way you'll get some idea of his journey.

Mark Scott  
October 1984

# INTRODUCTION - INTRODUCTION - INTRODUCTION - INTRO

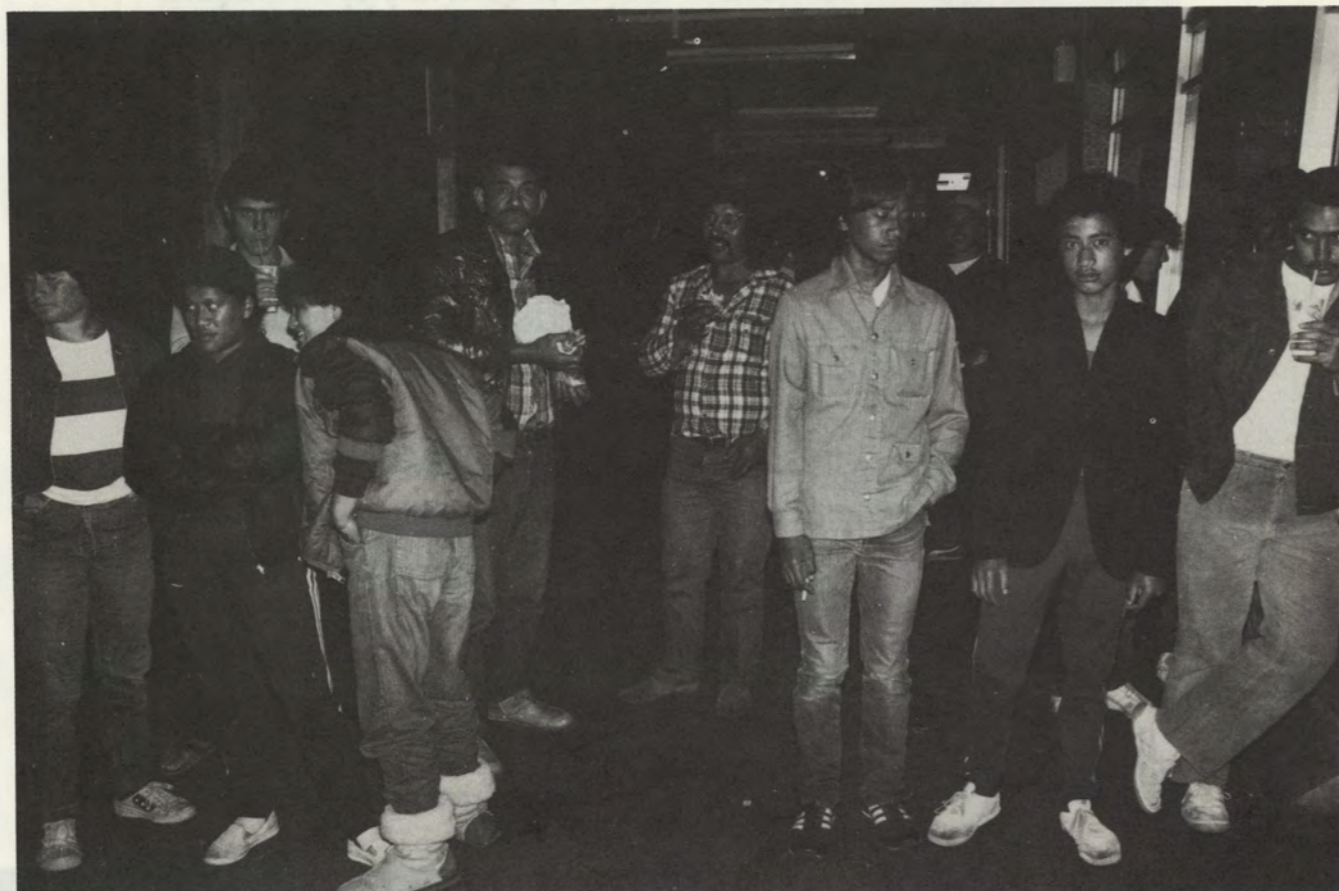
# IT'S A LATE NIGHT

It's late night, a greasy take-away bar late night in Rotorua – people pulling in for a feed on the way home from the pub, from anywhere. Everybody, everything is slightly wobbly, slightly queasy – it's been a long night . . . a night of hard drinking, and now there's late-night greasies.

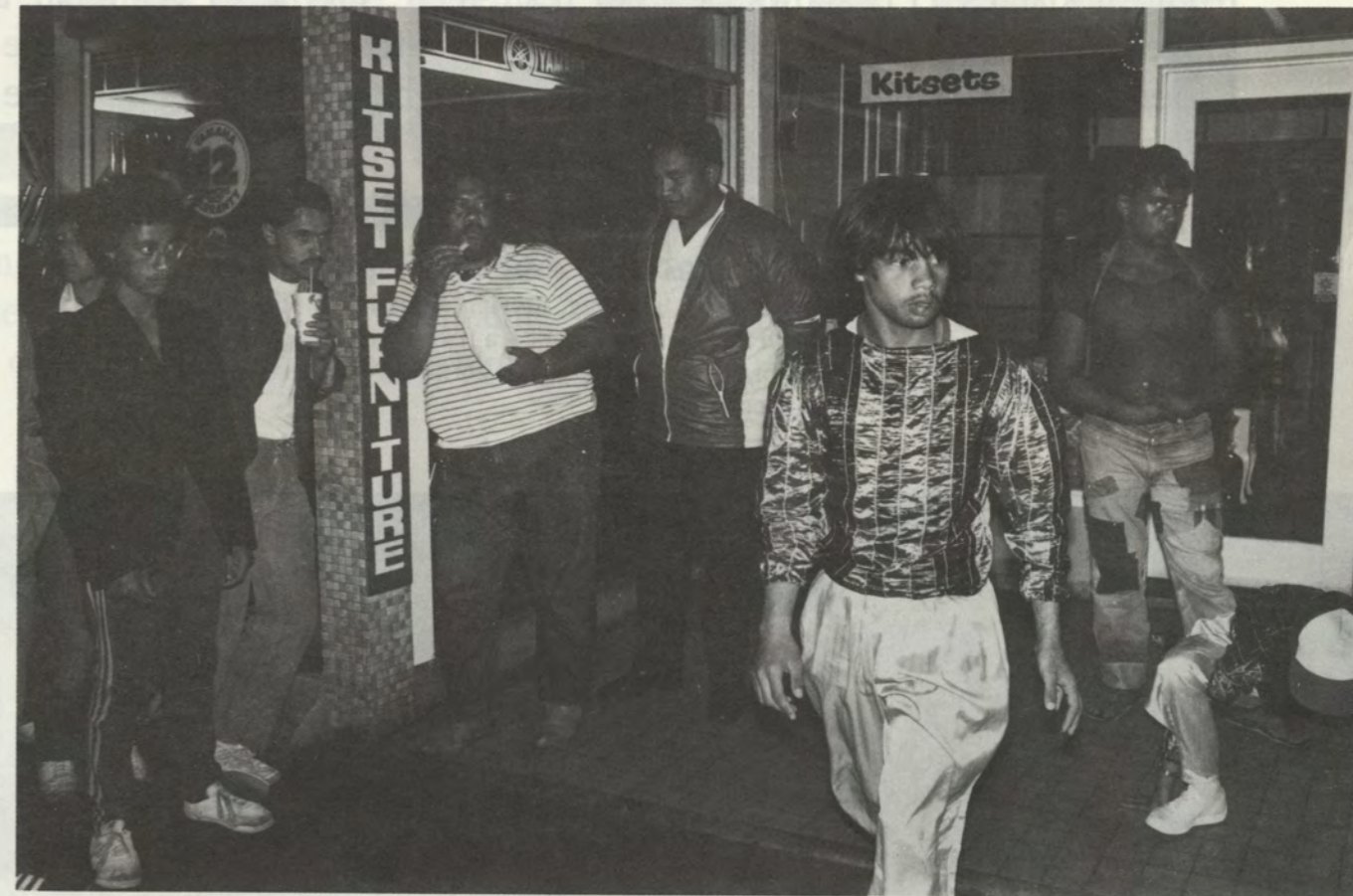
**NOBODY'S SMILING,  
NOBODY RISKS LOOKING  
AROUND TOO MUCH**



■ Takeaway bar Rotorua.



NOBODY'S SMILING TOO MUCH



■ Takeaway bar Rotorua.

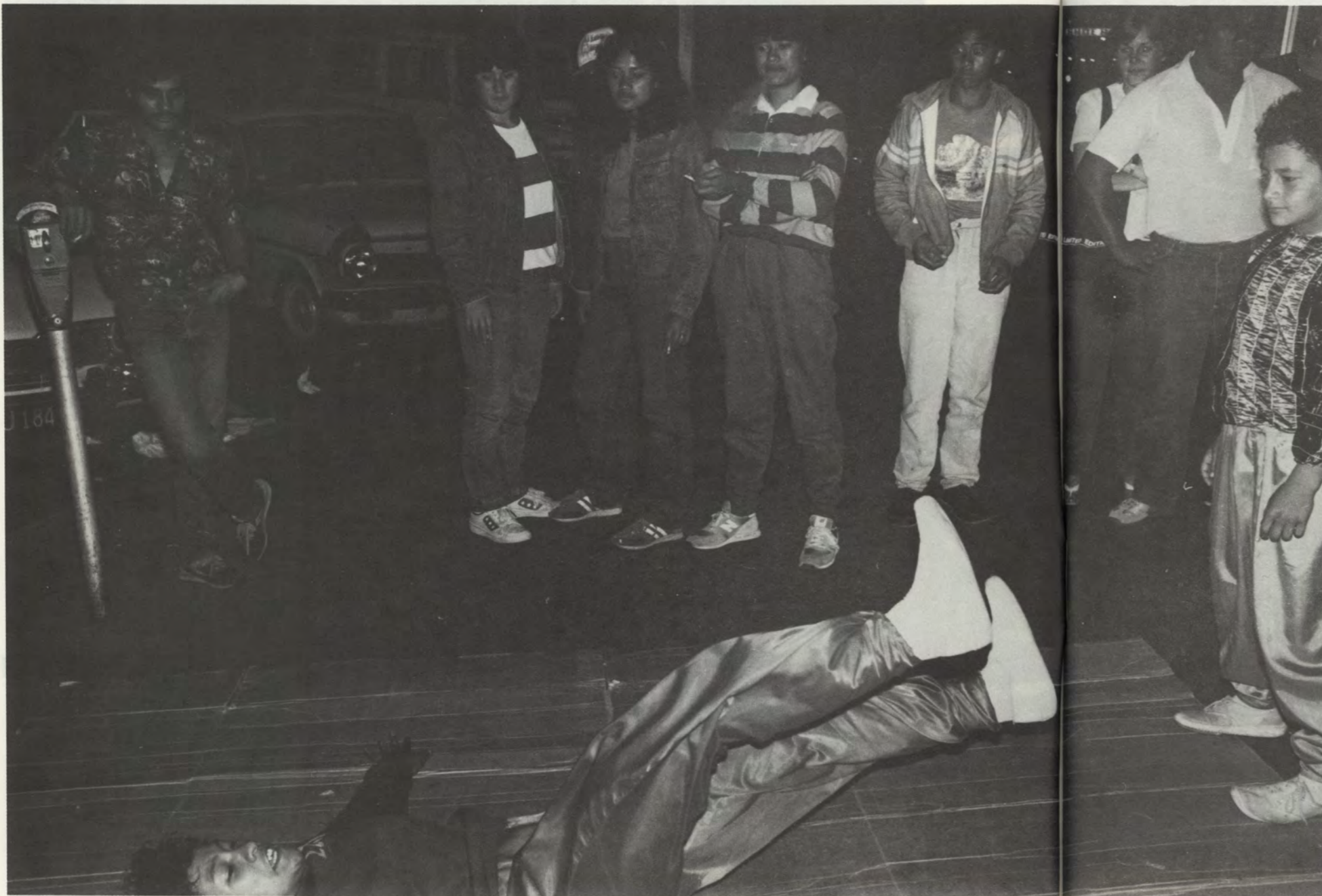
A van pulls up, a van of boppers – the Mega-zoids and Te Puke United from Auckland . . . they've just come from a competition at Skateworld. A van full of boppers . . . young, wearing shiny silks, satins – laughing, smiling, bopping, hungry after a night of dance. It's like they've stumbled into a morgue, but they're too revved up with good feeling to notice.

Someone brings out the sound, someone else spreads a hunk of cardboard on the ground and they get into some more dance. Young kids laughing, dancing in a piece of night air so heavy you could cut it with a knife.

The cardboard is set up to one side of the food bar and right there on the pavement the kids, with the power of the dance running through them, do their thing . . . alone in their world, absorbed in the moves, each other. Blackie from Auckland's TPU shows Desi her team-mate, maybe 11 years old, a new move – Blackie on this grim joyless street patiently going over the same step. Patient, smiling, understanding, dancing . . . laughing . . . taking her little mate in hand and showing her the way.

■ Takeaway bar Rotorua.

Around them both, everybody's bursting to dance – clapping, swaying, moving. Hamilton's Hi-Sonics pull up in an old Valiant – a friendly challenge goes down, there's clapping, a bottle of fizz gets passed about.



# LAUGHTER

Shiny kids dancing in the sour late night – people dancing in the street . . . a dream . . . let the music take control – smiling, laughing, loving. A breathing, moving circle of kids onto something, feeling good.

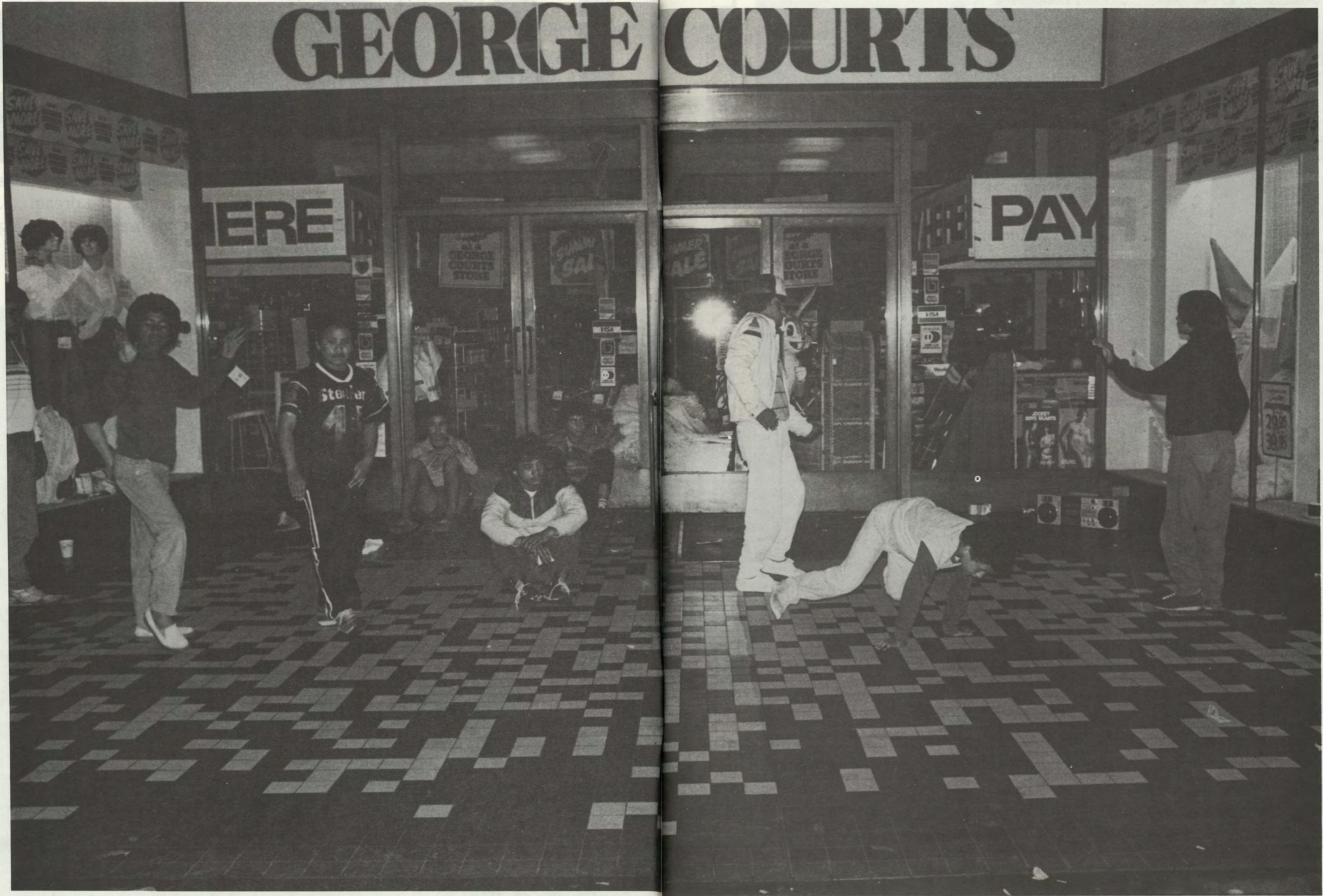
Before too long in this street of strangers the power of bop worked its magic . . . the exuberance of the kids, their sheer bounce, their excitement, their skill . . . it worked, it started with a kind of suspicious curiosity . . . people drifting over to get a closer look at those spinning legs, bodies – it was almost as if they had bitten on something they couldn't chew . . . laughter in the street at this hour – where's the catch.

Jason, from the Megazoids hits the cardboard – stepping out the bop, spinning on his head – this tiny fragile smiling kid slipping his body, his hands through the air. Such grace, such pride. These kids taking control of the night – join us, join our fun. The night finished with those tired wobbly faces laughing, those sullen strangers applauding. That's bop.

# B O P

JOIN US, JOIN OUR FUN — SHINY KIDS DANCING IN THE NIGHT.

# GEORGE COURTS



■ Victoria St., Hamilton.

Across at Hamilton the night before: the big night of the week is almost over – the dress up, hit town, spend your money, go home for the tv movie Friday night is almost over. Shopkeepers lock up, the squeaky clean scrubbed up little families drain out of the streets. Like they're swimming against a tide the boppers move in.



Victoria Street, Hamilton.

### THE PUSH, THE ENERGY, THE KIDS

Tonight there's a competition on at the Y – everybody's going. Three hours of hi-powered sound, new moves, new faces but soon enough the boppers are back on the street. Midnight, the length of Victoria St teems with the bop. This is Hamilton and the street's full of dance. If you are Polynesian and can do a bit of the bop you got a place there in Hamilton right through to first light. Most Fridays.



The push, the energy, the kids. One guy, Lionel Campbell, tries a belly spin on a parking meter, others try out new moves they saw at the competition . . . sprawl out on your shopfrontage, watch your mates do their moves, do a few yourself. Talk. Dance. Talk. Music. Excitement. Together for a reason. Watch the parade of drunken hoons doing wheelies, tooting their stupid horns. Chuckle . . . you got something they'll never have.

you got something they'll never have.

Victoria Street, Hamilton.

TALK•DANCE•TALK•LAUGHTER•MUSIC•ALL NIGHT

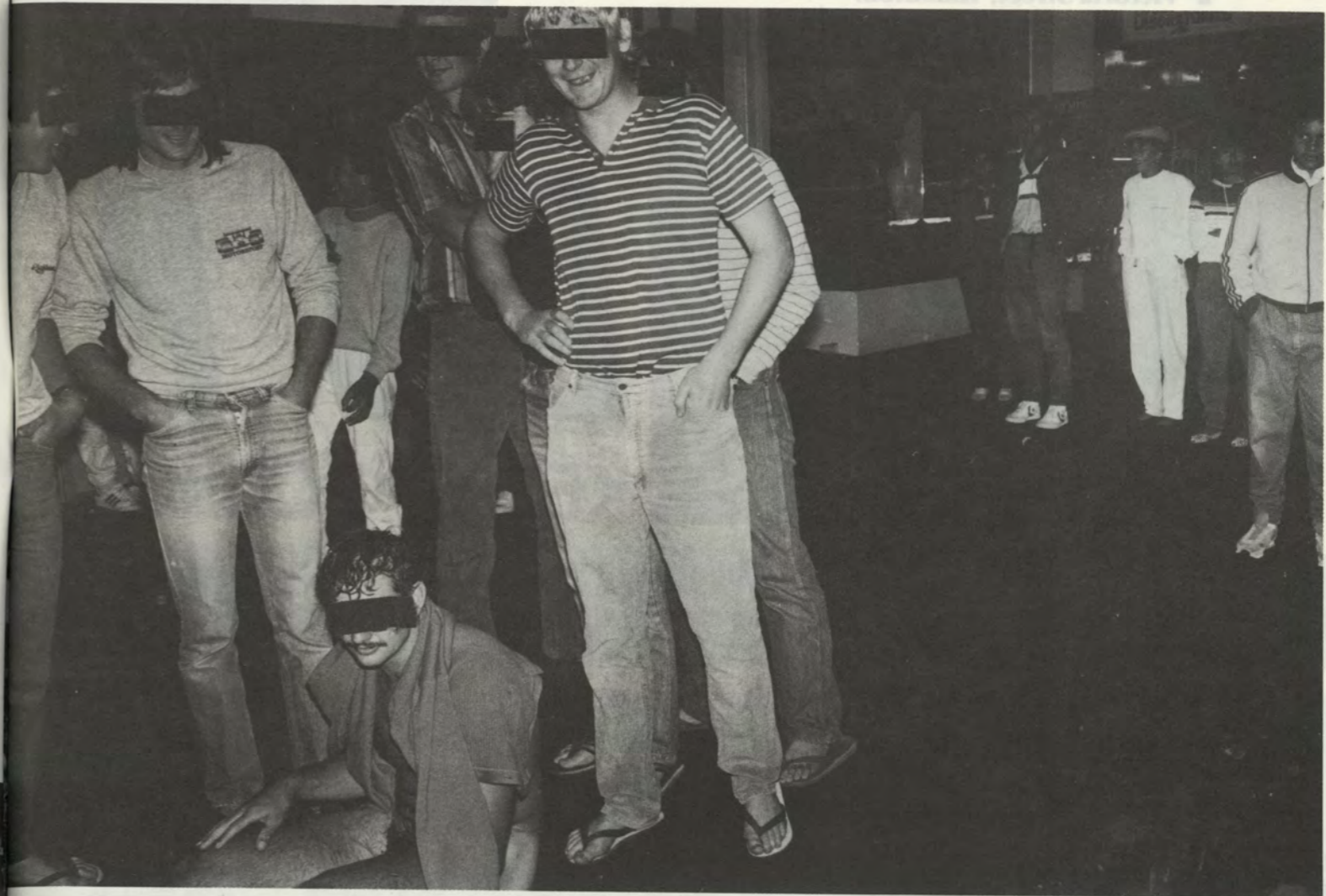


A little before midnight right next to the boppers this big pink carcasse flops onto the footpath – this guy, totally nude and totally out of it gets dumped from a ute . . . chained to a lump of metal, with beer thrown all over him. He crawls around, wallows toward the gutter to get away from his mates who still tip beer over him. Great joke – stag night Hamilton style.

Only some of the boppers bother to move over and catch the freakshow . . . neat, sharp, cool in their bop gear, they keep their distance, wrinkle their noses at this shambles on the pavement. They give off a look of disdain . . . it's the sort of look that white New Zealand dishes out to a Polynesian kid on the street without thinking. The kids turn their backs on the mess.

Victoria Street, Hamilton.

# STAG NIGHT



# HAMILTON STYLE

THE KIDS  
TURN THEIR BACKS  
ON THE  
**MESS**



KIDS IN A SMALL TOWN BANGING THE AFTERNOON AWAY.





# THE B O P KEEPS GOING

The bop keeps going, the odd white couple walking the streets stops by to watch the moves . . . a sort of aren't we daring darling look on their faces - but there's also respect. A beat policeman stops, talks, stays 10 minutes. He's obviously respected and liked. See ya you boys. The kids keep at it, they know they got something. At three in the morning it's still going. Laughter, dance, music, in Hamilton, Waikato Queen City. That's bop.



Victoria Street, Hamilton.

Murupara, wet Sunday afternoon: It's a tiny town lost in a man-made forest of imported pinus radiata - pine trees, laid out in rows . . . man-made trees ready for the mill. Away in the distance the Ureweras rise up . . . huge, beautiful, been there forever . . . all kinds of secrets hiding out in the hills, in the misty quiet of the bush. Lots of fresh-water streams up there. Quiet . . . special.

Murupara on a wet Sunday afternoon seems like a hundred miles away from those hills . . . houses newly planted out across the land, dropped there like pine seedlings ready for the mill. There's not a kid to be seen in the wide firebreak streets - but the kids are there . . . up a flight of stairs along from the grocers . . . in their own clubrooms, heaps of kids with video games, television, there's an old billiard table, a few sofas - but almost everybody is spinning on the lino.



MURUPARA MURUPARA MURUPARA MURUPARA MURUPARA  
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KIDS IN A SMALL TOWN DANCING THE AFTERNOON AWAY.

Kids in a small town, dancing the afternoon away, so friendly, so alive – endless practice, endless experiment, keeping on top of all the moves. One guy sweeps the floor, doing his share, does it like a gift for the others . . . some girls are trying a new move, strung out in a line . . . Jackie, Debbie, Joan, Rose, Kelly . . . faces flushed with pleasure. Some of the boys are helping out with dance tips . . . everybody's there for each other. Rua, who had been sweeping the floor slips into a quirky little body wave, puts a freeze on it and with a grin goes back to the broom . . . the girls, out of the corner of their eyes, join the smile. Rua is still into the heavy image of boots and swandri but he's starting into the bop.

Other kids snuggle up, watch some crazy legs, wait their turn – do it for themselves, for their mates . . . going gently through the day dancing, laughing, talking. There's a peace so strong, a togetherness so gentle you can't write it . . . only feel it.

**THERE'S A PEACE IN THERE SO STRONG YOU CAN'T WRITE IT. . . ONLY FEEL IT.**

■ Murupara.



KIDS IN A SMALL TOWN DANCING THE AFTERNOON AWAY, SO FRIENDLY, SO ALIVE – ENDLESS PRACTICE, ENDLESS EXPERIMENT, KEEPING ON TOP OF ALL THE MOVES.



■ Hamilton's Galaxy Boppers, Auckland.

Leaving Murupara winding up into the Ureweras the feeling clings so tight it hurts. Those kids, their love . . . these hills. These hills, with tongues of mist lurking in high-up valleys, with memories of other strong gentle days, of when the tipuna of those Murupara kids did their dance, lived their lives proud and free.

That's bop: fills you up, makes you feel proud, free, together . . . it's a force, a movement that has come from the hearts of Polynesian kids right through the country. Every little town in the North Island has got a couple of teams, got its meeting place for bop – there's hardly a Polynesian kid alive who hasn't got a move or two tucked up the sleeve – who hasn't been touched by the spirit the dance has been given.

If you're not bopping you dismiss it as a craze, if you are bopping you know it to be something different. Maybe you can't explain it exactly but you're into this bop thing like it's life or death. No big company with an eye for the big bucks has plunked bop down in front of you – bop isn't a pair of roller skates or some toy . . . bop is something you've grabbed hold of, something you've worked at solid for a year or so, something you've built up from nothing, practised, pushed, stuck with . . . it's yours.

**FREE . . . . .  
PROUD . . . . .  
TOGETHER**



■ Nga Tapuwae.

PASSING ON TO EACH OTHER A GIFT. . . OF LOVE, AROHANUI.

For many of the kids bop is life and death . . . for the forgotten kids, the kids who missed out on Te Kohanga Reo, for the kids who get kicked in the guts by school, by the job market, who know nothing of their so-called traditional culture, for these kids bop is their last stand . . . when you've been up against it for as long as you can remember you've got to do something or you die. At last, somewhere to put your love, to express your spirit, your togetherness just when you thought it was all over.

Rotorua that Saturday night is a good place to start and try to catch the mood of these forgotten kids . . . Rotorua is a violent town, a lost town – neon motel signs light the night, spell money . . . a land, a lake, a past steams in the darkness.

Except for a handful who entertain the tourists, the real owners of that land have no place, sort of

sulk round, keep their heads down. It's an angry town and in early 1984, bop had a real struggle to get going . . . the dancers were attacked in the streets by so-called bop bashers . . . people were still into scrapping and the good feeling of bop was fighting some impossible odds. Too many kids had given up.

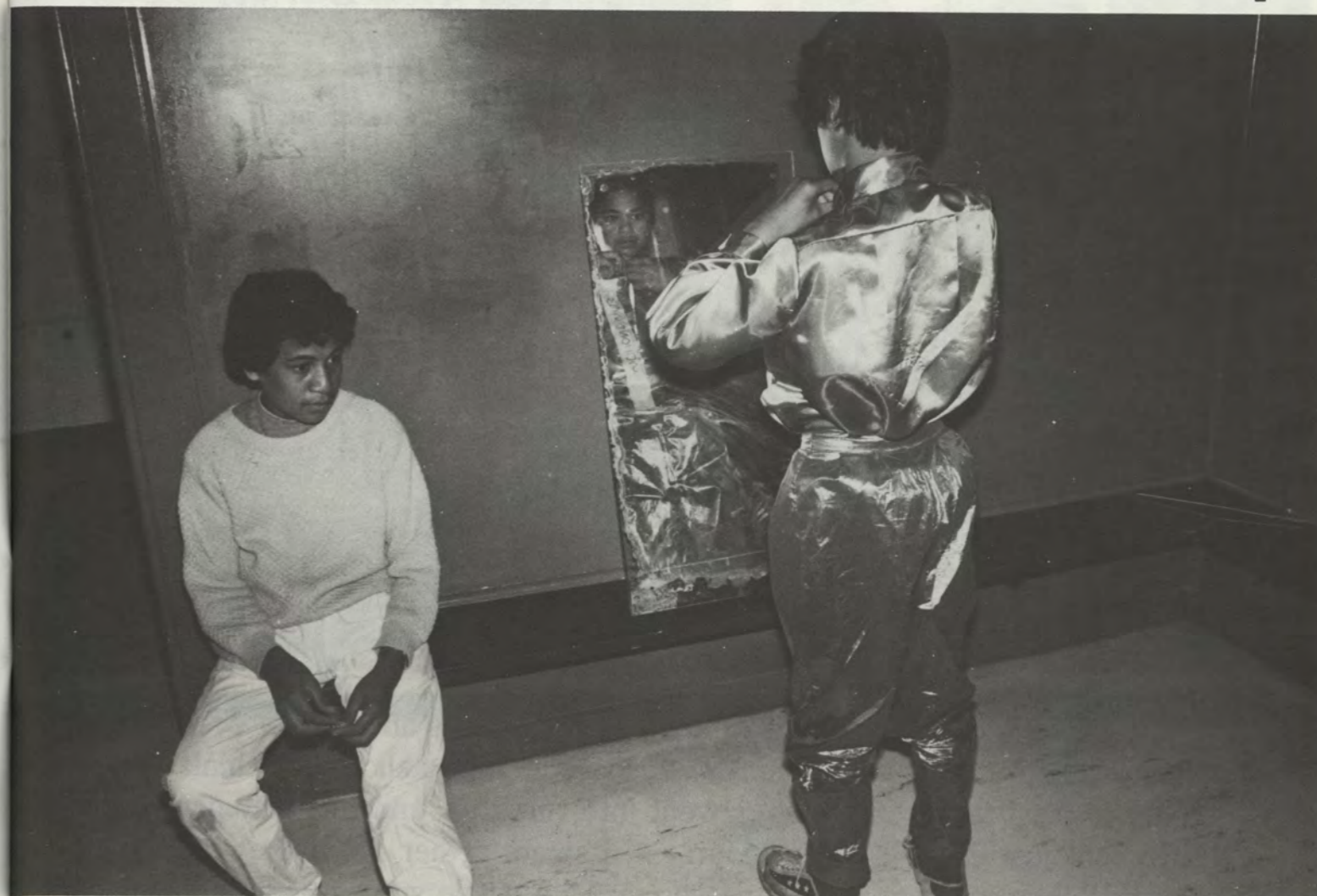
And so, to that Saturday night, to a bop dance competition at Skateworld. Early evening finds 30 kids milling about outside – there's electricity in the air, a kind of sullen menace leaking into the street. In the crowd, groups of guys are giving each other the heavy eye, circling each other in the gathering twilight – bop music trickles out from behind the door.

Bang, it's on, what everybody's been waiting for . . . this young guy suddenly runs off like his jeans were on fire, maybe five big men race after him . . . most of the crowd follow to catch the action. The young guy is bailed up in a video parlour and the stony-faced owner is shoving him back out on the street, where he gets his beating . . . kicked punched almost in turn – don't ever lay a hand thwack on my son thwack again, the men move off leaving this young guy dazed and bleeding against the wall – the kids are all worked up.

## THERE/WAS/NOTHING/BEFORE/BOP

BOPS SAY LOOK SHARP, THINK SHARP. . .

■ Auckland's Megazoids, Hamilton.



# THERE WAS NOTHING BEFORE BOP

One young girl who nissed the action asks . . . was there a smack up, a smack up, but she has three more that night to choose from. In an atmosphere of gathering violence, a group of girls hold off from going inside and say how they feel – Margaret, Lyette, Caroline, Aileen and Tinishia, they let it out in a rush.

## I GOT NOTHING TO BE PROUD OF BUT THIS BOP...

"I got nothing to be proud of except for this bop . . . nothing else to be proud of . . . nothing to call my own – just my tv . . . its second time around for School C . . . you can have your School C and your UE, don't get you a job . . . it's a waste of time . . . I gave trouble so I could leave school. Parents? Yeah they support us by letting us out . . . our friends support each other more than our parents . . . our parents are doing the same as us, hanging out, holding on . . . I'm going to make sure I don't have any kids, bring them into this stink world . . . there's nothing I can hand on to my kids. The little kids now know more Maori than us, there are these little kids at UE Maori level . . . compared to them we've been let down . . . all we can pass on is love."

"There was nothing before bop – nobody cares about us – everyone in this town looks at us like criminals . . . if we go into a shop they think we are going to steal things . . . yeah, I went into this shop and this lady gave me a filthy look just cause I was a Maori . . . I swore at her . . . if they look at us like that, then we give them a reason . . . the whole system is in a shambles."

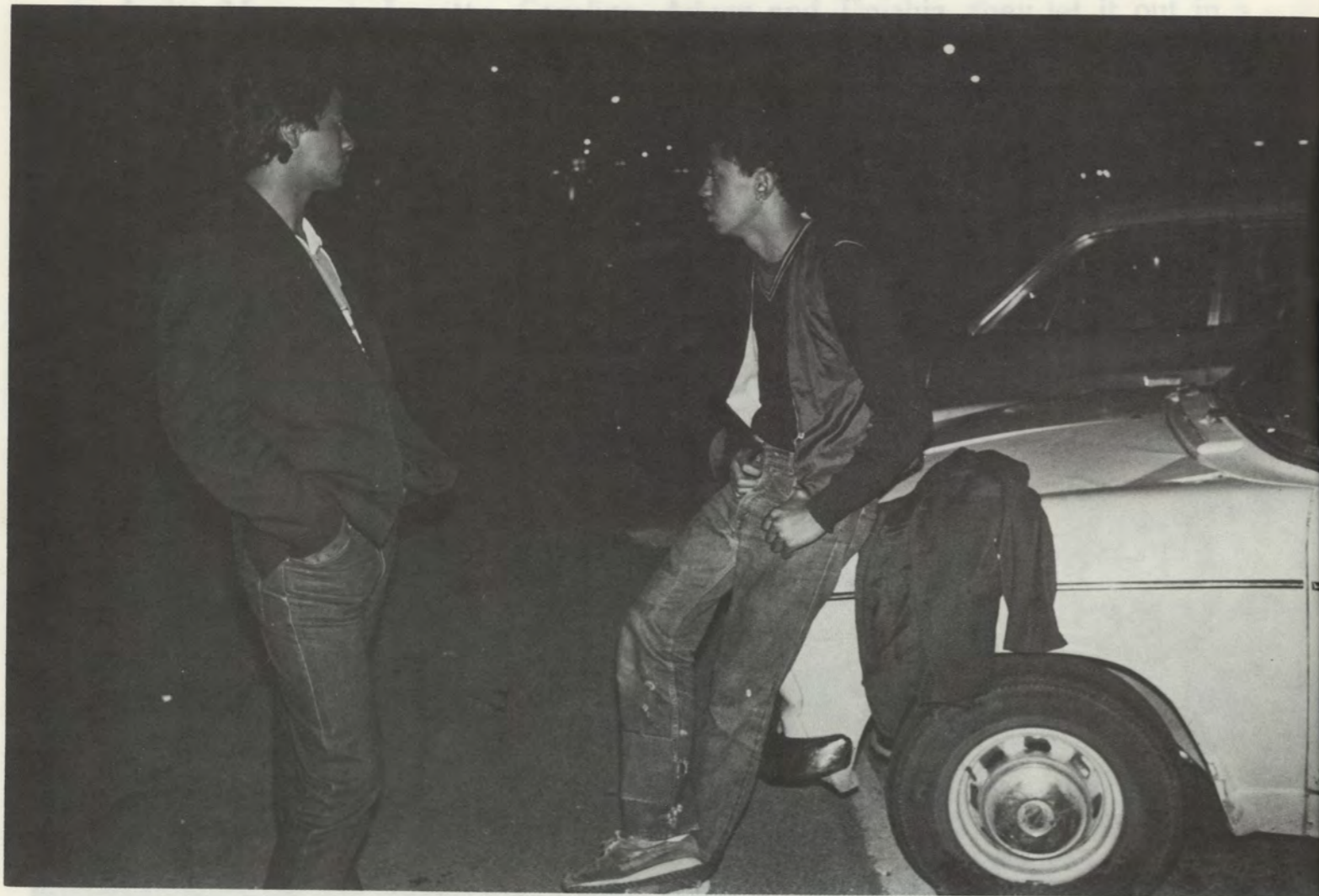
■ Outside Skateworld, Rotorua.



THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN HAND ON. . . WE'VE BEEN LET DOWN.

Later, across from the girls a couple of guys lean on the bonnet of a car, just standing there. What's going down in Rotorua? After a bit of pushing, a bit of talk, out it comes . . . so lonely, so depressed its frightening – doesn't raise his head. "You know, life is just getting sadder and sadder."

There's a song with the words heartache to heartache we stand, searching our hearts for love. That kid on the Rotorua street has got the heartache but he hasn't made the stand . . . yet. Thousands of kids have.



■ Rotorua.

# ENTER THE

# DEMONOIDS

■ Demonoids, Mangere, Auckland.

The Demonoids have come round to Kawa Solomon's house in Mangere, Auckland – to the shed out back to practice, like they do most days. The pool table's been biffed, there's carpet over the concrete – dartboard, sofas, photographs, bullworker, dad is fiddling with the Holden.

The Demonoids are good but not exactly top-flight, just one of hundreds of backyard bop teams. The guys thrash their bodies on the floor – no sign of pain as they slam off the carpet onto raw concrete . . . they hit that concrete, they pound into their moves – sweating, working dedication, coming in at the bottom struggling to get there – no ballet company could go to it harder, with more discipline. They go to it like bulldogs soiling in for the kill – had to pull them off the dance so we could talk.

They have made their stand, "We started up when we saw some girls doing it at the town centre – we watched them and then really got into it . . . there was nothing, nothing at all . . . go to school, come home have a sleep watch Donald Duck on tv, nothing . . ."

"But bop, you get high when you do it, it's picked us up and carried us away . . . our first challenge, we saw them doing it and we were as good as them so we shot home to change, shot straight back up . . . that's what happens, we are going to keep on doing it until we really get good, then travel all over the place like a football team."



FROM BOP WE GET OUR EVERYTHING . . . THERE'S NOTHING ELSE.



■ **Demonoids, Mangere, Auckland.**

“What do we get from bop . . . we get e-very-th-ing . . . yeah, a lot of pains, bruises, scabs, especially with the new moves . . . we get everything, there’s nothing else. I couldn’t hack school that’s why I got out . . . there’s no point going to school really, what happens after School C and UE . . . they’re only giving jobs to experienced people. They think we are losers, but all they’re doing is teaching you what they know, you have to listen to what they say . . . they don’t bother to find out what we know . . . we do school on their terms, it should be back in the olden days, in those days you didn’t have school but you still used to learn, learned more. Now there’s not enough homes, food prices, people living in caravans – we’re lucky to have our bop.” The Demonoids crunch back into the concrete. They’re onto something.

Another night, different suburb and Roland Turner from the Breakerzoids, is outside yet another skating rink – the night is over . . . the Dolly Parton music, the mainly white skaters in the lolypop skirts, the cuddles in the corner – it’s all over for the night. Roland’s group has been practising the bop tucked away from the skaters, nowhere else

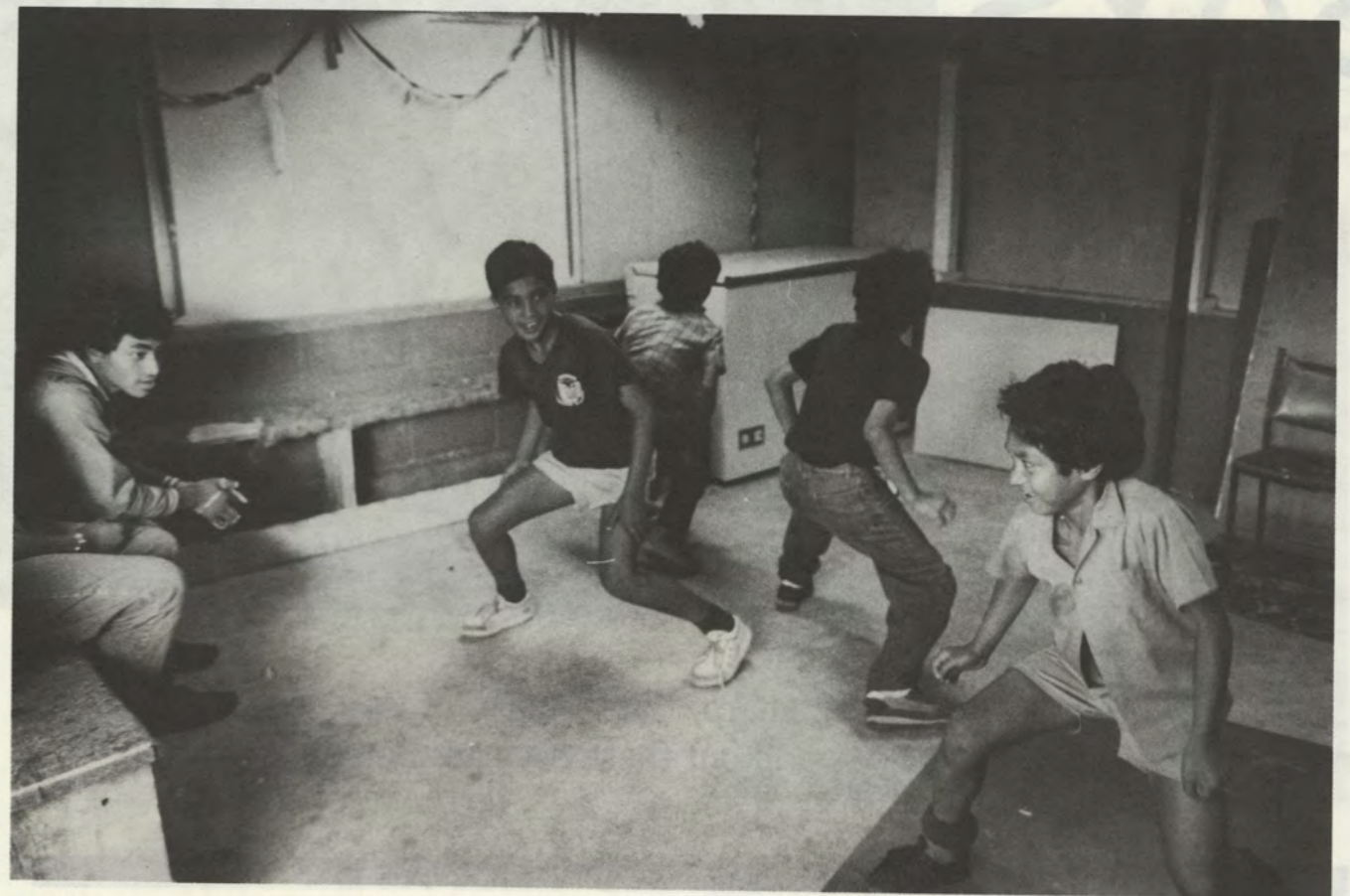
to do it. Now he’s ready to walk home – in South Auckland, kids walk fantastic distances to get anywhere. I give him a lift, he gets into this slick little Mitsubishi rental car, from another world, takes hold of the mike and talks. It’s dead quiet, nothing stirs on the street.

“Bop, it sort of builds through your body and runs up your brain and something tells you – a kind of feeling in your stomach that makes you want to do it . . . you don’t think of yourself as no good . . . I feel I got some ambition doing something worthwhile with my friends . . . yeah, you don’t think of yourself as no good . . .

. . . school, sport, that’s different, there you say to yourself I can’t do that and it’s the same with . . . I’ve always wanted to learn Maoritanga but something keeps stopping me – it’s just not for me I reckon . . . I’ve tried, but I feel out of it . . . that’s why I’d rather be with my friends doing the bop . . . I just don’t feel in the right place . . . it hurts, it sort of hurts me, but I just can’t. I’m going to teach my kids to start off when they’re young, but me, I never got it when I was young – so that puts me out of it I reckon.”

“If bop wasn’t around I’d have no ambition, just plain life for me . . . pinning my hopes on getting a job . . . got to concentrate to get my School C . . . everything right, a straight through year . . . if I don’t get my School C I got no hopes . . . just hoping to get a job, keep searching I suppose. You know if bop went tomorrow I’d feel pretty blank, nothing in my life to go for, that’s about it.”

■ **United Boppers, Otara, Auckland.**



If you haven't got bop, haven't got anything else, you can always reach for a glue bag – a plastic bag with a gob of glue, like custard, in the bottom . . . glue which some chemist designed to weld plastic together – ferocious stuff – you can carry the bag anywhere, weld your brain together anytime.

There's a smell of mothballs and a strong sweet blast of glue in the toilet – in the half darkness a handful of kids have got their heads in bags . . . shuffling staggering – the eyes roll and pop in their sockets, swollen sweaty faces.

■ The toilet is in the hall at Nga Tapuwae college in Auckland, where a private-run disco is being held. Out on the floor the disco has long since given way to the bop and, for most there that night, so has the glue bag – there's no way you can bop with a head full of glue.

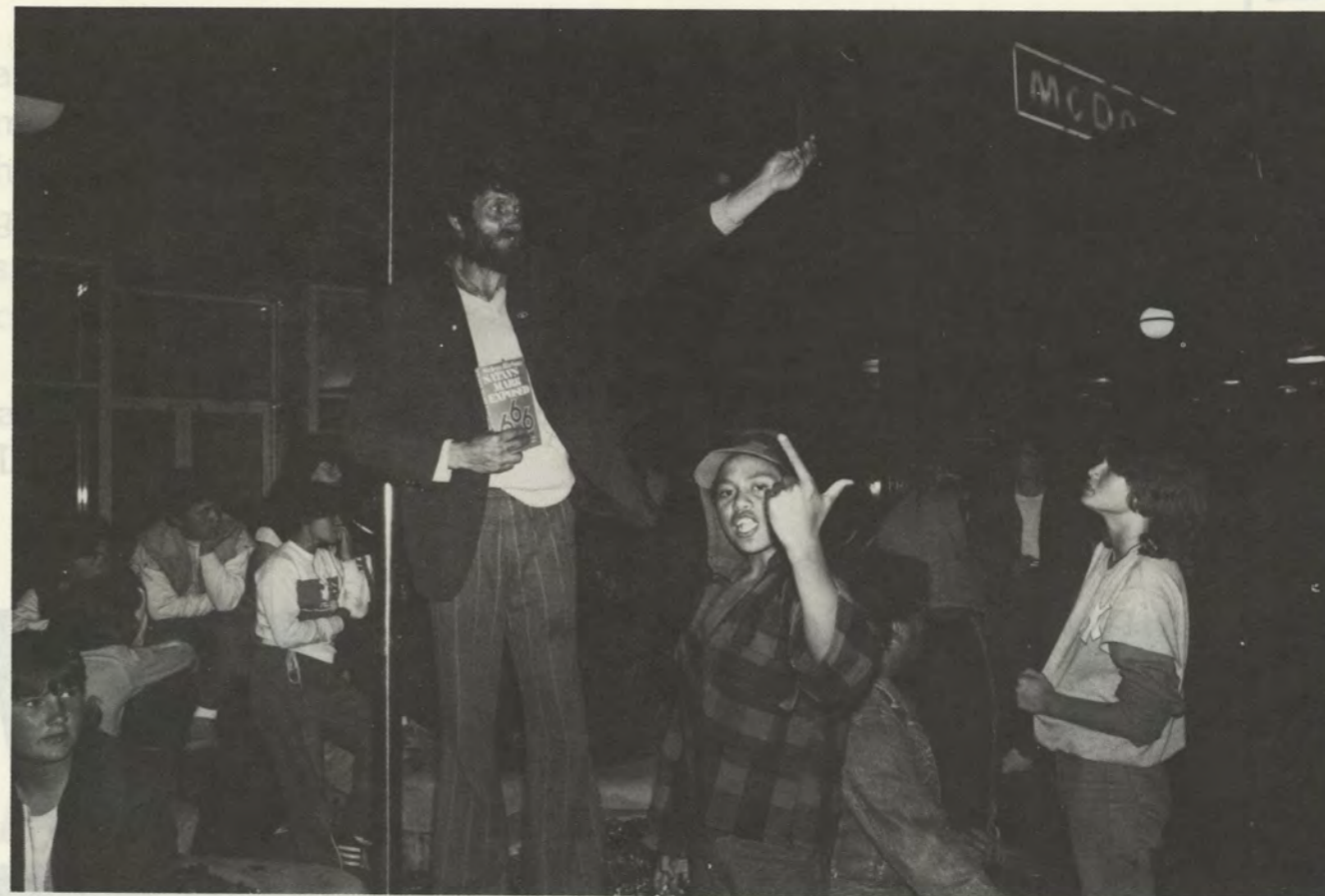
# BOP SAYS YES

SHE TAKES THE PLUNGE. . . STAYS OUT THERE.



Bop says fitness, says look sharp, think sharp, dress good . . . glue says no to all those things . . . the world out there says no. Bop says yes.

■ Denise Nelson, Nga Tapuwae, Auckland.



■ Bopper and street preacher, Wellington.

Away from the miserable toilet scene, throngs of sparkling kids ring the dancers . . . a little girl, Denise Nelson, dives on the floor like it was a lake full of icy water – holds her breath, takes the plunge – the burst of applause just about sends her off again but she stays out there, furiously doing her moves, not daring to look round. Everybody knows everybody, soft familiar kids, all physically close, building each other up with their dance, their applause.

The toilet's another world. It's a world bop has broken into, breathed fresh air into, but there are kids out there hurting so bad they can't lift their heads out of those bags. Thanks to bop they are a minority but their hurt is the raw edge of a hurt shared by all those forgotten kids. Strangers in their own land, who for the first time in their lives have stood up straight and tall and passed on to each other, through bop, a gift they have – their love, their arohanui.

The gift has survived. A strong beautiful girl in the middle of Auckland's Aotea Square, where hundreds of kids are bopping, grabs the tape recorder . . . her brain swims in glue, she stumbles,

takes forever to get the words out. She moans, she struggles, she laments in confused swooning glue talk. Right inside her, love with no place to go – the depth of her pain comes from the depth of her love. She gives what is her own karakia for her land, for her people.

"I'm sitting here . . . and as you can see there are lots of people enjoying themselves . . . I reckon they are hassling us . . . too much hassles with the police. There's no law against the glue . . . the street kids have their rights to sniff glue . . . it's their life . . . no one there that could tell us what to do . . . we have the rights to do such things as this . . . I reckon the Government should get a house for our street kids . . . the way we are going we're not going to get anything straight . . . I'm a street bunny, a glue baby . . . I hope that the people who listen to this tape believes in us . . . and I hope one of these days we will get our land back . . . and I hope we will get back . . . and we get our land . . . get our land . . . because the stage we are . . . if we get our land back these buildings will go down and we will be free . . . I think . . . I don't know what to believe . . ."

. . . IF WE GET OUR LAND BACK THESE BUILDINGS WILL GO DOWN AND WE WILL BE FREE.

CHAPTER TWO ■ CHAPTER T  
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# THEY SAY YOU ARE TO BLAME

Talk to boppers and you don't have to scratch too far to find it — the heartache passed on by a white society which instinctively knows how to hurt, knows where to kick . . . knows how to run its schools, it's everything to tell the kids they don't exist — that their love, their energy counts for nothing and never will.

The heartache, the confusion starts in when you hold the first little doll you get for your birthday, hold it in your arms. That doll will have a pink skin. Although it might seem a small thing, what it means is that right from your first birthday you're learning to take pride in this sweet little white doll. The question you don't know how to ask is . . . mum, how come it's not a sweet little brown baby doll, just like me.

But that's nothing compared with what happens when you hit school . . . Polynesia doesn't figure in what they choose to teach you or how they teach you. Just like the doll, take pride in anything so long as you don't take pride in yourself. It gets worse.

The way they mark School Cert it's like they're out to get you . . . did you know that no matter how well you do in Maori they will only let 35 per cent pass but they make sure that 86 per cent pass Latin. There's all sorts of other secret ways they make sure it's easier to pass "academic subjects" . . . it works out that a good mark in Maori will see you fail but a poor mark in Latin will be scaled up so your pakeha school mates will pass. Of course, nobody tells you that . . . not even when you go back the third year running to sit the School Cert they won't let you pass.

■ Rotorua.

The message from everywhere is: Look, work hard, pass your exams and get that job. You'll come right if you knuckle down, just need some more application . . . of course that School C we've taught you to set your heart on is actually carefully designed to make you fail . . . might as well get used to failure because there aren't any jobs anyway. Come, earn your self-respect with us, gain your mana on our terms, try harder . . . the blame can be only yours.

Heartache . . . the way they do things at school these days hurts just as bad as being strapped for speaking Maori, only it's slower and crueller. Destroying.

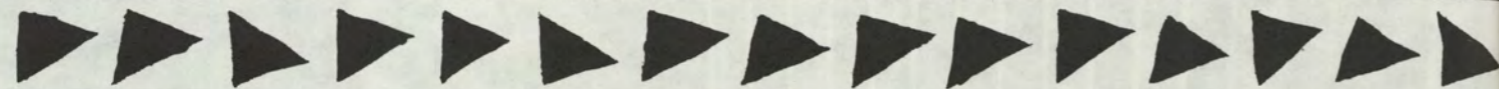




# ONE THING YOU ARE IN

But there's another cruel lesson twisted into you and that is no matter what you do it seems everybody, even your own people are standing on the side-lines too lost, too tied up in protecting their own lives to reach out and claim you.

Problem is you've been surrendered to school, to television . . . gone so far down the white road it's hard to turn back by yourself. With bop, with break-dancing you've got off that white road, and the cruel lesson is that your own people, their culture, their past and their idea of traditions don't recognise you and you don't recognise them either.



You don't even get a welcome home stranger. You see, until you feel at home on a marae or can take your place for a full day at the PIC (Pacific Island Church) then by and large your own people won't help you. In most cases they won't even meet you halfway. Your fault again.

Your hurt comes from many places — sitting through a day of church services in a language you no longer understand, never getting to a marae and if you do feeling stupid . . . bombing out of school. Now, young children are learning through Kohanga Reo rock solid pride in their tanga and even some schools are opening half an eye . . . there are powerful sitrings in the land.

Your hurt comes from many places because unless you get on a good scheme which teaches the tanga of this land, chances are you'll miss out. But there is one thing intact, one thing that can't be taken from you, one thing left — out there you rangatahi are in this together.

What's held you together is the love that comes from all Polynesia . . . arohanui, the wide strong love of simply being together with people . . . it's a quality, a life-force that's been around for longer than any of us have been alive. For you it was love with no place to go, until bop.

To see why bop has this special power, this special place . . . to understand its true importance, you've got to look at more than just the dance. Bop isn't just bop.

# THIS TOGETHER



■ Tuilite Thrillz, Wellington.



■ Ana Scott and daughters, Auckland.

## ANA . . . IS THE CITY

In Auckland Ana Scott has a daughter Viasa who's just started up the Midtown Breakers. Ana is a Samoan nurse, was married to a Maori — two of her daughters sit beside her as she talks.

▲ Ana recognises the issues but what a lot of kids get from their parents is . . . Why don't you work at school? Why don't you come to church? And why do you do this bop? Why? ▲

"Deep down the average New Zealander doesn't care about Polynesian culture, all this talk about multi-culturalism here and equality there is just so much lip service, rather than true feeling. Their idea of culture, I often wonder what the word means . . . opera, art galleries."

"When the city councillors, the architects, the newspaper editors decide what's right for a city it is always along pakeha lines . . . does the city just exist for the white middle class ideal, why can't the bopper say about Aotea Square this is our turf . . . it gives them a sense of belonging to the city — a lot of them don't have a sense of belonging anywhere, even at home."

"If someone asks me about culture in this city I'd say what the kids are doing with Aotea is the only place — a blend of all things Polynesian. The

dance they're doing down there, it's a symbolic way of saying this is my land . . . a small political stand compared to the big land marches — just listening to the kids after they've been down there . . . it builds up their self esteem. Too many of our kids walk around with their heads down to the ground, wear heavy jumpers when it's summer, knock each other if they use long words . . . they've got no bloody confidence in themselves."

"The spirit of the people everywhere has been demolished — everywhere you can see it, in their body language, the way they stand . . . the spirit of a whole people — when we talk about pride and dignity it comes from the spirit, not from wanting a Trans Am car or a flash house or a flash this or a flash that . . . this thing's the regeneration of a spirit that's long been dormant . . ."

"Back in the islands everybody belonged, the whole village gathers to watch the kids dancing at night and we all go there to give them support to make them feel important — the whole village does that. That's the same feeling you find at Aotea Square to some extent — but when I went down there to watch our kids we all came as nuclear families and went as nuclear families — that extended family feeling, if it was there, was only at a superficial level."

Viasa interrupts: "It is like a family — you get to know everybody, it mightn't be a family to you, but there, everybody's like a brother and sister, everybody's welcome . . . and there is culture in bop . . . in the hand movements."

Ana takes it on the chin: "I see with bop they have that and I guess they lack that outside bop with families scattered and they lack someone saying you're fantastic you're great, you're somebody."

## JUST FOR PAKEHAS?



■ Wellington.

WHY CAN'T THE BOPPERS SAY THIS IS OUR TURF, TOO... BACK IN THE ISLANDS EVERYONE BELONGS.

# *TRIED THREE TIMES FOR*

# *SCHOOL CERT.*

Dean Rua, works with street kids in Auckland, knows the sort of deal kids get dished up, he's been there. Three years, like a prison sentence, three years . . .

"My sister tried three years to get School C, she did it for my mother, three years straight . . . she was strong, not many can handle rejection . . . me, I didn't want to try School C, it frightened me, a week before the exam I went home to see my mother to tell her, she understood. You know . . . love doesn't conquer all . . . my parents gave me a lot of love but they couldn't help any other way . . . help with the homework, that sort of thing."

# *LIKE A PRISON*

# *THREE YEARS*

"If you were a Polynesian you just didn't get up in class to read a lesson and if you had to you'd stutter — it was up to the pakeha brainboxes either side of me. Your mates would think you were big noting if you volunteered to clean the board or to do the sort of things a teacher would like . . . you'd hide behind your shyness. Your mates would say what's the use of School C, maybe they were right and I ended up concentrating on my tattoos."

# *SENTENCE*

"I didn't have confidence in myself from anywhere — in my upbringing I was never involved in my culture, getting up and speaking Maori was out because no-one taught me. It feels good seeing Maori people speaking out now. In my time you were put down all your life and were putting others down . . . you didn't realise it. With bop this putting down thing is not happening . . . everyone appreciates what a kid's trying to do, he's not jeered. With bop they are free and people can't slap them down because they are so damn good . . ."

"The really positive thing I see, is that bop is about the Polynesian way . . . communal living, extended family, doing things together. Action songs, hakas, dances done in groups . . . the spirit is there."

# TAKE PRIDE IN

SCHOOL IS TOTALLY USELESS.



■ South Wellington Intermediate.

WE FOUND AOTEAROA, LONG BEFORE CAPTAIN COOK WAS EVEN THOUGHT OF. THEY DON'T TEACH US THAT.

South Wellington Intermediate: At the school hall about 40 mostly Polynesian kids are in luck — a teacher, Suzy Sampson, thought things through and has managed to get them two hours a week of school time to learn their bop. We'll have a closer look at how bop fits into school later, but in the meantime the kids are saying that school is totally useless . . . that they are treated like poor cousins . . . that teachers expect them to learn but can't even be bothered to find out how to say their names right. But their answer to one question just about tells it all — the answer is the tip of a very large, very cold and very white iceberg.

I ask who discovered Aotearoa, the name pops up right off — "Captain Cook" You're sure? — "Yeah, we did a project last year. Nah, it was

this other man who discovered New Zealand." What about you guys, didn't you discover Aotearoa, sailed all those miles in your canoes to find Aotearoa? — "Oh, the Maoris, they were here first." What's this they stuff? — "We were here first."

It was a real struggle to get the kids to understand . . . "We found Aotearoa, it was the skill, seamanship, enterprise of our tipuna that landed us here long before Captain Cook was even thought of" . . . The kids are excited by the process . . . "Yeah, Captain Cook just took the land away from us." Do they teach you that? — "No they just say Captain Cook discovered New Zealand."

# AND MAYBE

# CAPTAIN COOK

Take pride in how great Captain Cook was and we might pass you . . . along the way learn that you and your tipuna don't exist.

And because our schools give enormous weight to things white something truly horrible happens — sure, you're made to feel like your culture counts for nothing at school but at the end of the day you take that message home — you are given nothing to take home that you can share with your parents except a feeling of failure, given nothing your parents can add their knowledge to. The message . . . your parents count for nothing.

School comes right inside the house and chops at respect for your parents. When was the last time you asked your mum which harbour the Endeavour came from . . . most Polynesian kids I know have long since given up going to their parents for the sort of knowledge a school tells them is important.

One day, ask your father about how he built and sailed canoes in the islands, ask your mother what it's like to be on a marae, ask your dad about the taiaha, did he ever see it done. Ask about Kupe, who discovered Aotearoa in a canoe just like ones still being sailed. There's a rich world in there that means more than a million Captain Cooks.

Yeah, those kids in that hall there, who don't know about Kupe, let alone what a powhiri is, who in years to come will have to know the difference between infamous and notorious when they sit School Cert — yeah, those kids are into the bop alright.

# WE'LL PASS YOU

# TAKE PRIDE IN

SCHOOLS . . .

THEY JUST FORCE  
PAKEHATANGA  
DOWN OUR THROATS.

Tessa, doesn't want her surname printed, is a member of the Buffalo Girls and sort of helps manage one of Wellington's top groups the Twilite Thrillz — her father is strong Maori and her mother is a pakeha. Both are teachers:

"A lot of Maori kids don't have their hopes on anything — I was the only Maori seventh former at my school because I had family backing . . . I've also been taught my Maoritanga — but for a child whose parents have dropped out, who may be Maori but knows nothing about their Maoritanga then there's nothing.

If their parents didn't get the love, security and things spiritual from their parents then they can't possibly hand it on to their children — all that's left is school and they just force pakehatanga down their throats. And it's really sad if all they think about is getting School C because it doesn't matter how much you achieve, most Maori kids still need spiritual fulfillment — being part of the family of bop helps give you that."

MARAES . . .

THE KIDS ARE VERY SHY  
. . . THEY  
ACTUALLY FEAR  
THE MARAE.

"I'm torn three ways, I've always been brought up to take the best of two worlds — the true Maori world and the pakeha — and now I've been in the city nine years I've seen the Maoris who can't take anything from either world because they've been given a raw deal from both, and so now I'm pulled to them, as well. I feel sorry for these Maoris, in Wellington there are no maraes available . . . some aren't worthy of the name marae, they charge their own groups \$60 an hour . . . a lot of Maori kids have never been welcomed on a marae, so to them a marae is a thing of the distant past."

"These kids are very shy if they go on a marae, they actually fear the marae. The maraes are the last resting place for Maoridom which is why they are so resistant to change . . . they can't handle this changing world . . . the image of the marae is the old people's image . . . the young have very little place, they have to be shy, be seen and not heard . . . but . . . the warriors would have been just as egotistical as boppers . . . they would have been the young bucks then."



# WHAT . . . ?



Wellington.

# FAMILY OF BOP

"Through bop a kind of community has developed among young people which wasn't there . . . was there a long time ago before the pakeha came but hasn't been here since the pakeha, it had been lost."

Christine Tuau, had just made her first public appearance at a bop competition in Hamilton, she and her sisters had just started up the Tuau boppers . . . their brother Texas is in the Galaxy boppers. Like so many she repeats the message:

"There are tons of kids who haven't a feeling of security from their parents . . . you try your hardest at school and you don't get anywhere, if you go to a marae and you don't know your Maoritanga you feel stupid and who can you turn to in that situation, you can only turn to your mates and being together with bop brings security, unity helping each other out

The bop still isn't the same as your own culture . . . in the Maori culture group you're taught the meaning of the moves, taught to love your moves, you learn new things all the time — there should be a helping hand to learn Maoritanga."

THERE SHOULD BE  
A HELPING HAND  
TO LEARN OUR  
MAORITANGA.

Ngaronoa Rewiti-Ngata lives in Gisborne with her husband Hone — they are both involved in bringing Maoritanga out from behind closed doors, in working with kids, but they haven't given much thought to bop. I talk to Ngaronoa:

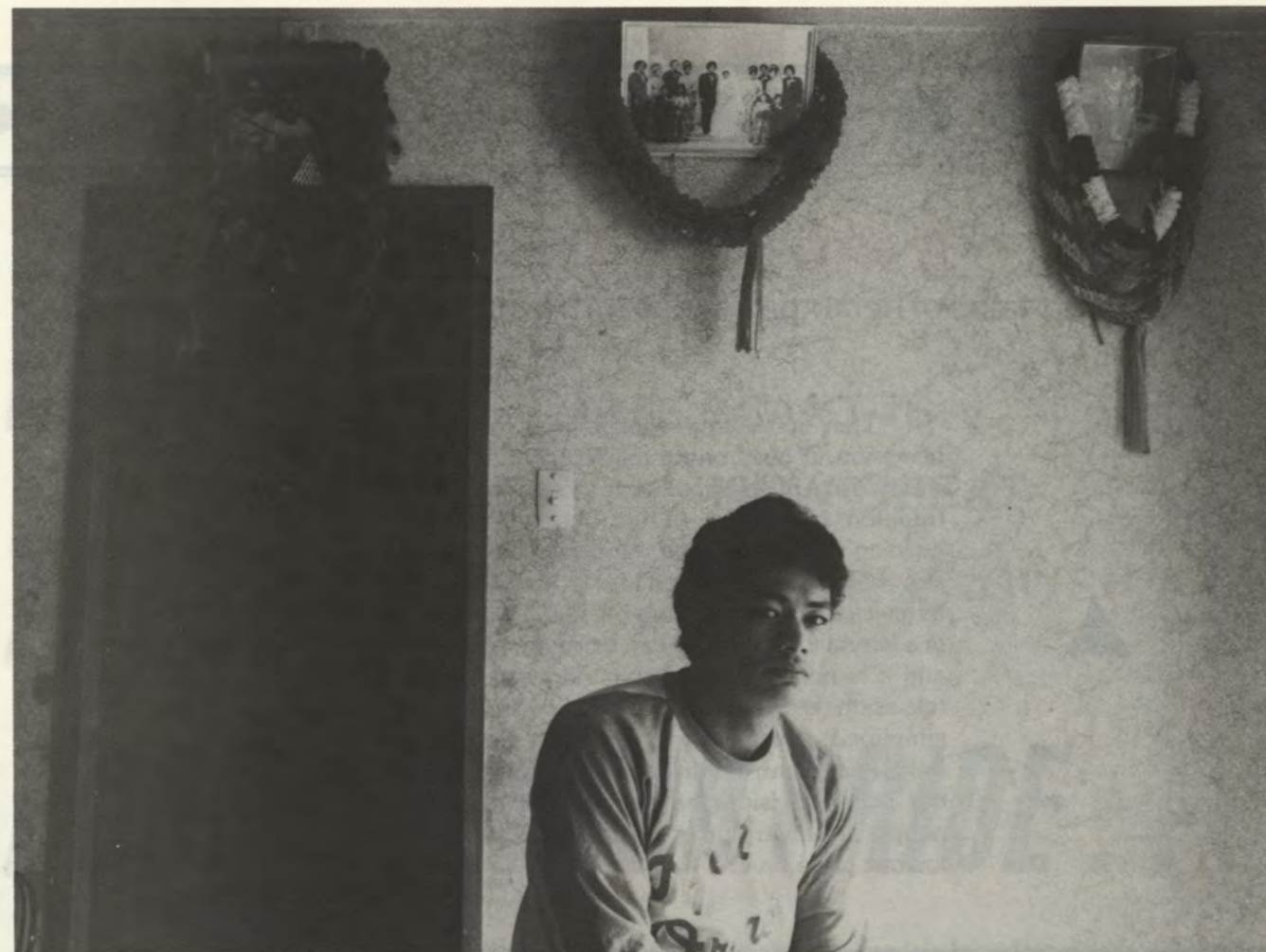
"The Poho O Rawiri marae, speaking about Gisborne, is a big white elephant, run for the tourists, it is not being used by the kids and a lot of them have been dislocated from their own home marae. It's to do with the way a marae is run and it comes back to what the people think is important . . . the appearance of the marae, the first priority is how it looks."

"The people have already made it and they've forgotten what it was like to be a kid and when they were kids things were different anyway — they're not relating to the community outside the marae. I don't blame them for that, they have retreated to the marae to hold on — but there has to be change."

## WITH BOP

Petelo Petelo is a member of Wellington's Kinetic Energy, he's Samoan and proud of it: "That is the way I was brought up . . . you are Samoan, so why not live like a Samoan, feel proud . . . I sing Samoan songs, I wear the lava lava, I don't feel ashamed — but a lot of kids tell their parents to stuff their culture, that they don't want to go to church all day and there's still a lot of parents who don't bother."

"My girlfriend feels real bad because she wasn't taught Samoan, she even tried to learn it, but couldn't . . . I want to take her back to Samoa to show her. You know, a lot of kids are wanting to get back to their culture . . . but they don't know how, so they give up."



I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT SAMOAN DANCE — WITH BOP YOU CAN GET OVER THAT SHYNESS.

## WE'VE TAKEN OUR PLACE

"Me, I don't know enough about Samoan dance . . . there are a lot of kids who are shy of their dance — but I reckon you can get over that shyness through bop. There are close links between island dance and bop and now that we have broken through the confidence barrier with our bop we're starting to mix island culture in our dance and show off with pride."

"For a lot of our team when we go to Samoan fia fias we actually do our Samoan dance and you won't be shy at all. Your relatives are surprised and afterwards they come up and they're proud — it's been a long time coming but bop is breaking down a lot of cultural barriers — people aren't ashamed of who they are, it's something inside you makes you want to dance, to take your place."

And bop, the dance that so many are living for, that's doing so much, the dance that is probably one of the most positive things to happen to Polynesian teenagers in Aotearoa so far this century came about not because people out there

opened their arms and said . . . come, you're our children, we love you — it came as a freak accident in television programming . . . given with no love, but the kids have seized it anyway and called it their own. So, to look at television.

Ana Scott talks of her experiences with both Maori and Island attitudes to television . . .

“The first thing that comes on is that television, it goes on no matter what, it’s always situated in a main place like an idol. In our teaching tradition old ladies sit for hours story-telling, building pictures in your mind, they are the main storytellers . . . they don’t teach history so much as give a deep feeling about the past . . . they tell it in a fairytale way so you can be proud of your past and it is done in a very romantic way. The way television is presented is very similar . . . the simplified form, the romantic form . . . Polynesians can relate to that immediately . . . but with television the slant is that the English people are a very great people, there is no room for our pride, ever.”

“And, in the islands before we came over we heard a lot about European society, all those marvellous things, we didn’t hear about racism or class distinction so when we come over and find ourselves at the bottom of the heap, well we don’t want to realise it was a failed dream . . . there is the little box to turn on that dream.”

“It is a much deeper, deeper sense of loss than the European because we have come all this way and our race isn’t regarded highly as you thought and you feel powerless to make any change — to make the dreams come true . . . the Maoris have even a deeper sense of loss because this has happened in their own land.”

“The kids pick up even more from television because the parents reinforce it . . . my mother can sit and watch some soap programme all afternoon and she can’t understand English — because television seems so important to the parents and because the parents often give nothing to replace television, television replaces them.”

# WITH TV THE SLANT IS HOW GREAT THERE IS NO THE ENGLISH ARE. ROOM FOR OUR PRIDE . . .



■ Ana and Viasa Scott, Auckland.

What Ana says about television comes down to this for most kids:

After a day at school grappling with pakehatanga you come home to a mother who can't help because she can't speak pakeha English or offer any advice that in any way fits with what is happening to you . . . but there is one escape, one soothing friend sitting in the corner, not that it really helps either.

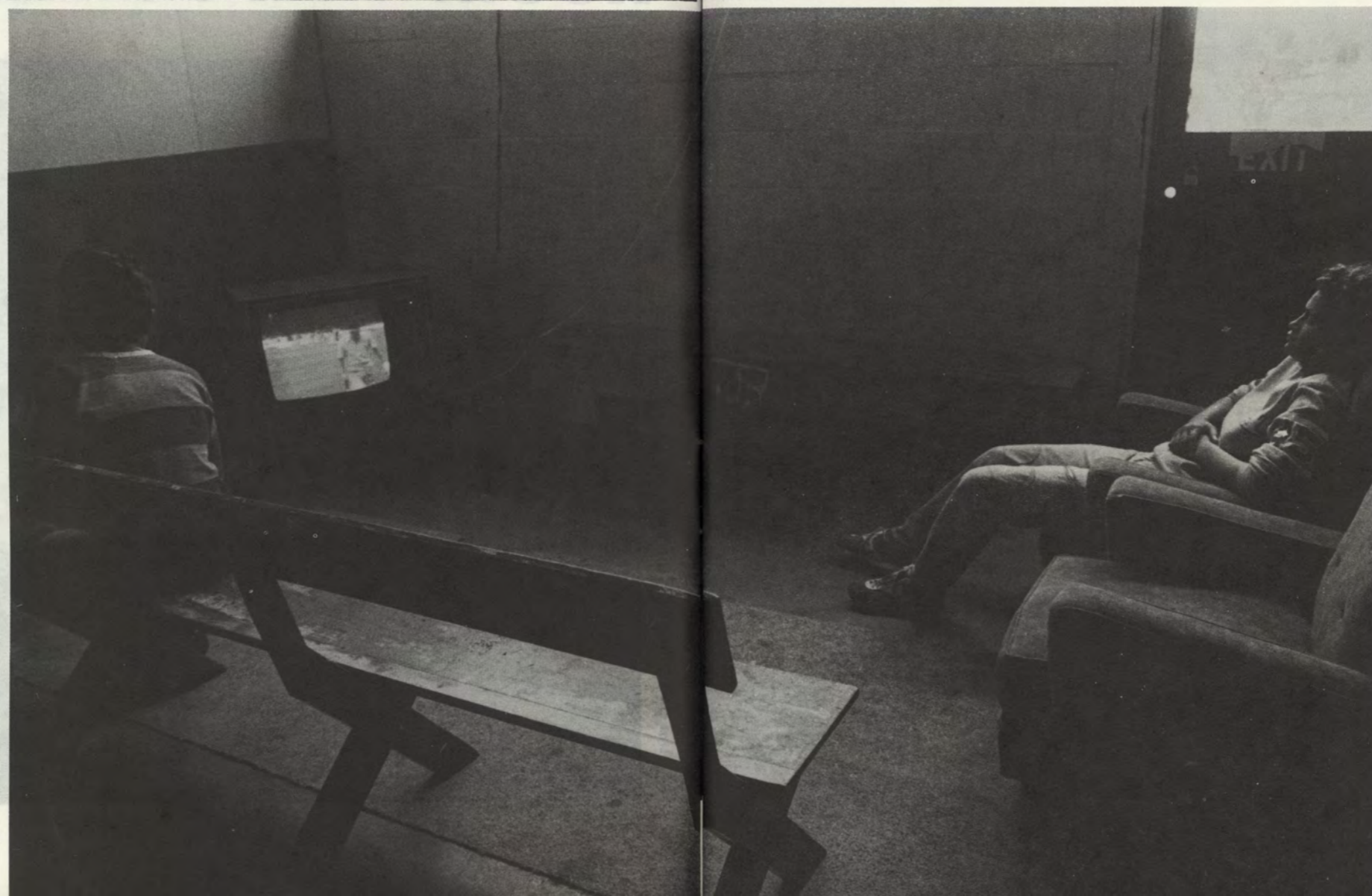
# TVTANGA

A friend of mine ten years ago could tell you nothing of his island culture, but he could, and still can tell you all about the sisters in Petticoat Junction, can reel off the characters in Greenacres — knows hundreds of trashy American programmes back to front, he is a master of his tvtanga.

# TVTANGA

He passed one subject in School C and that was art — and God he tried, he tried so hard to write that perfect essay on Wuthering Heights.

Anyway, he used to come home from school to find his mother watching television, sitting on the floor crocheting a bedspread or a shawl, used to take his place on the couch, gently breathing lighter fluid from a hankie. His mother never quite knew what the smell was.



■ Murupara.

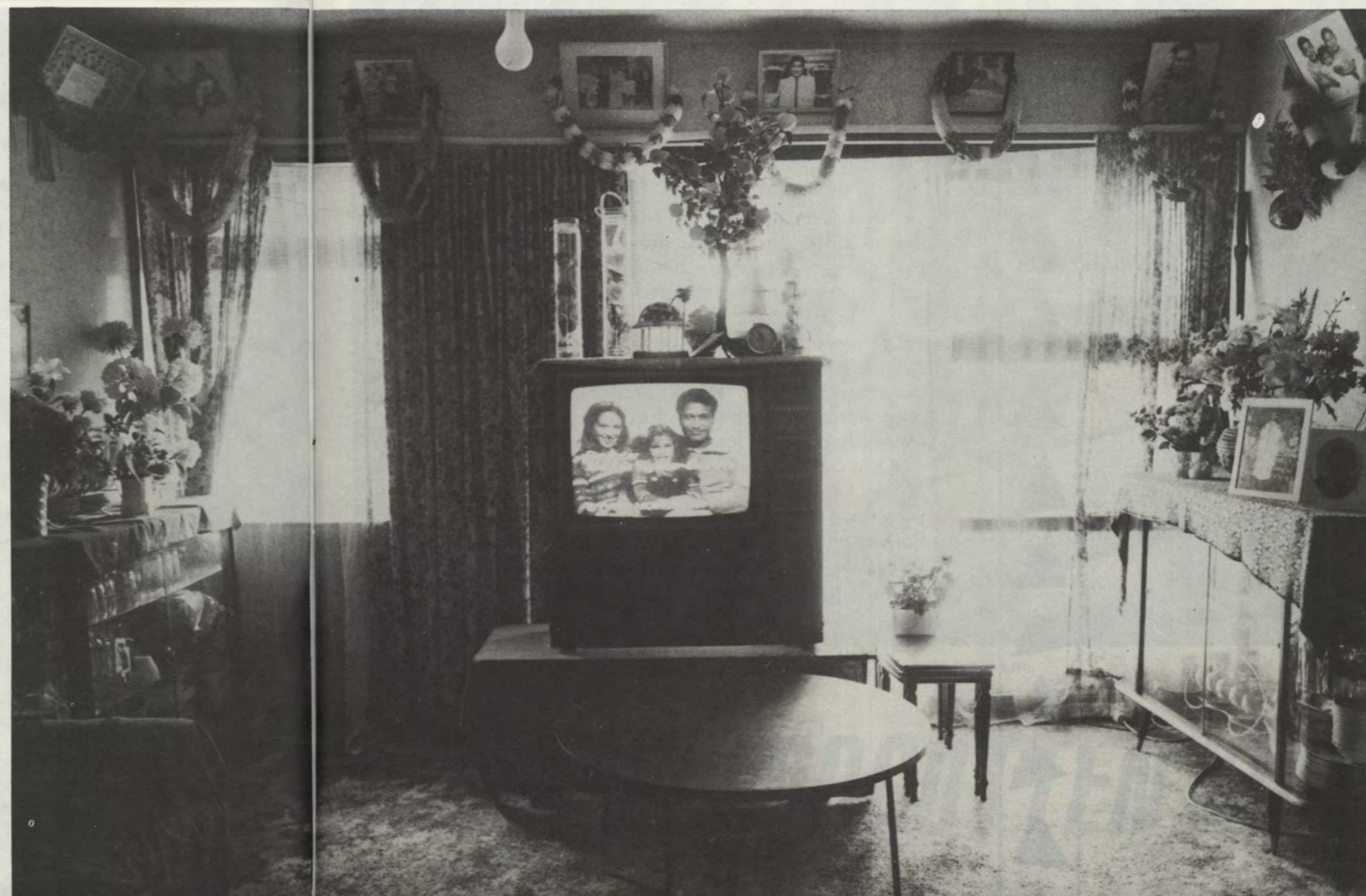
■ Wellington



And on Sundays when everybody came around for singing the parents would be in one room singing, getting up to dance, laughing, sitting back down, clapping, coming out with all this sharp humour, dance, more laughter — all afternoon long.

In that room was the Polynesia I knew and the feeling, the spirit in that room was not far from Murupara, not far from that Hamilton shopfront — not far from the spirit of bop . . . while all the dance was going on the kids, who couldn't speak their parent's language would have their eyes glued to some really foul Sunday matinee in the next room — Dean Martin with some leading lady or something worse. Every Sunday the same. With bop they're making their way back into the other room, but on their own terms

## DAD AND ME IN AMONGST ALL THAT WHITE TV



A Polynesian kid watching television in NZ can be excused for thinking he or she doesn't exist. Except for that cop show image of the big bad ghetto dope pusher or the Diana Ross Motown number the world is white. Get it?

## ***BOP ON TV . . .***

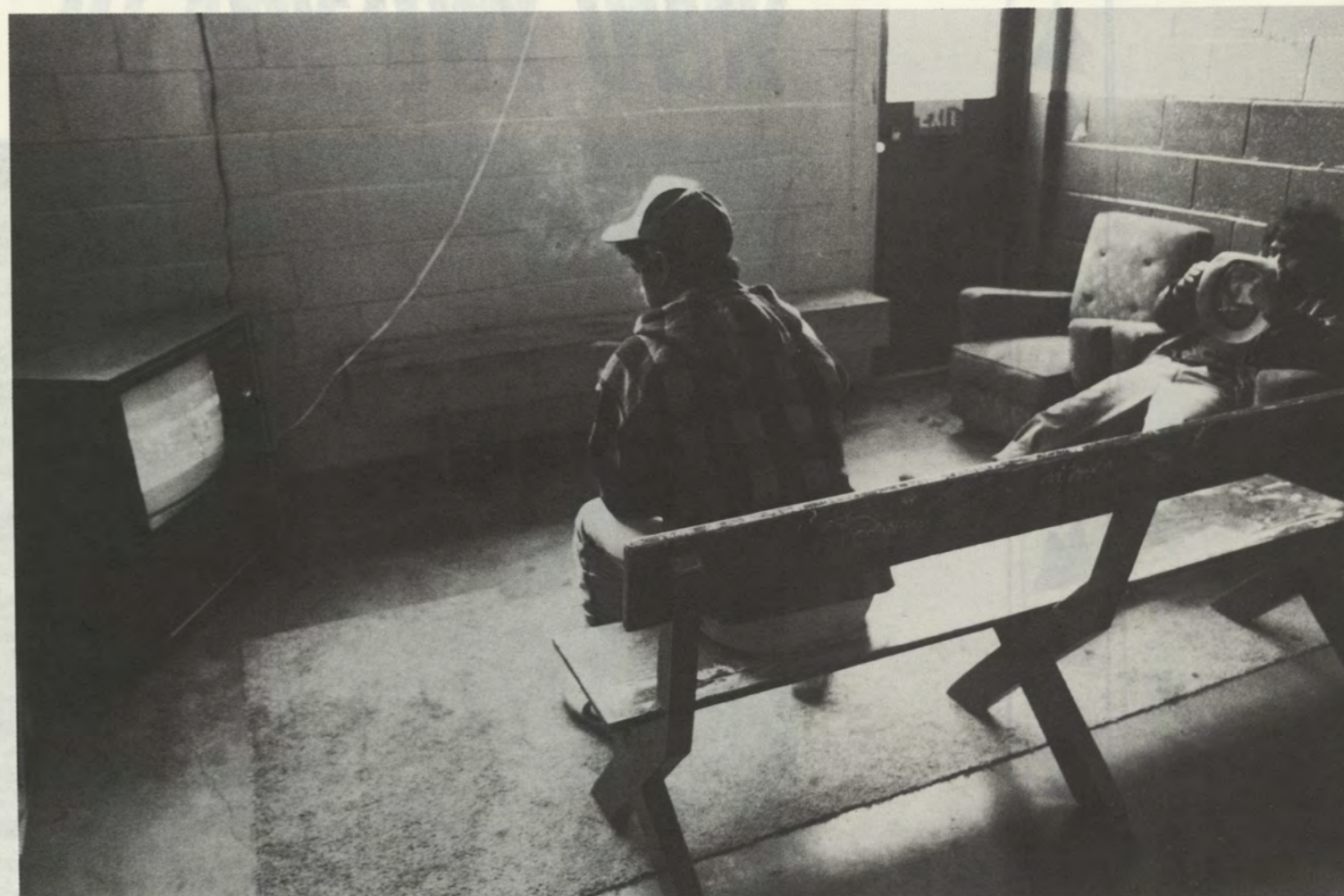
Not surprisingly the television image of black America is the one the kids identify with and given everything else it's often the only thing they pick up from anywhere — its ghetto street talk, ghetto body language and ghetto expectations. The image presented by the tv cop shows has always been a negative one — that mean black dude, remember? Fame, Roots and a few other programmes relieved the picture a bit. Roots was especially powerful for the kids.

But halfway through 1983 and by complete accident, television at long last dished up something positive, alive, exciting that a Polynesian kid here could really relate to . . . something that said you can do it, go to it, you're incredible. It happened on a Saturday night about 7.30.

In amongst all those people wrestling grizzly bears and waterskiing on their heads the tv programme That's Incredible squeezed in a few minutes on some ghetto gangs who were dancing in the streets instead of fighting, were doing the bop.

That five minutes out of a life-time acted like a trigger — for hundreds of kids that Saturday night was the last they would spend staring blankly at the box. The forgotten kids got something at last.

## ***SOMETHING TO GO FOR***



THE TV IMAGE OF BLACK AMERICA — IT'S THE ONLY ONE YOU PICK UP.

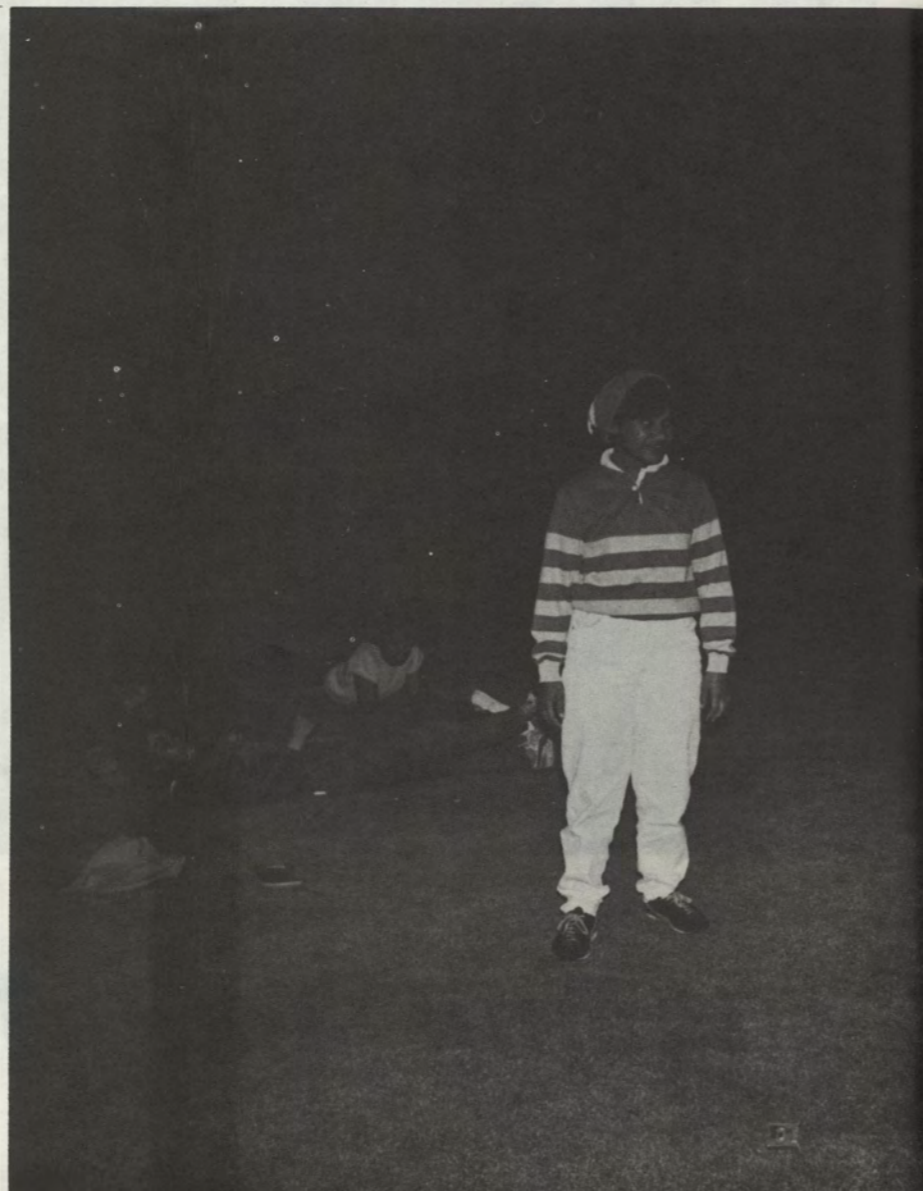
■ Murupara.

## ***FOR OUR FORGOTTEN KIDS***

# ***YOUR DANCE***

Ngaronoa Rewiti-Ngata gives a tribute to those kids: "You stand on your own, you dance for yourself, no-one else is giving it to you, you're getting it from in here digging deep and pulling it out. People don't realise their true worth until they dig deep and I realise I am proud of our kids and their bop because that is what they are doing.

# ***AND YOU'RE***

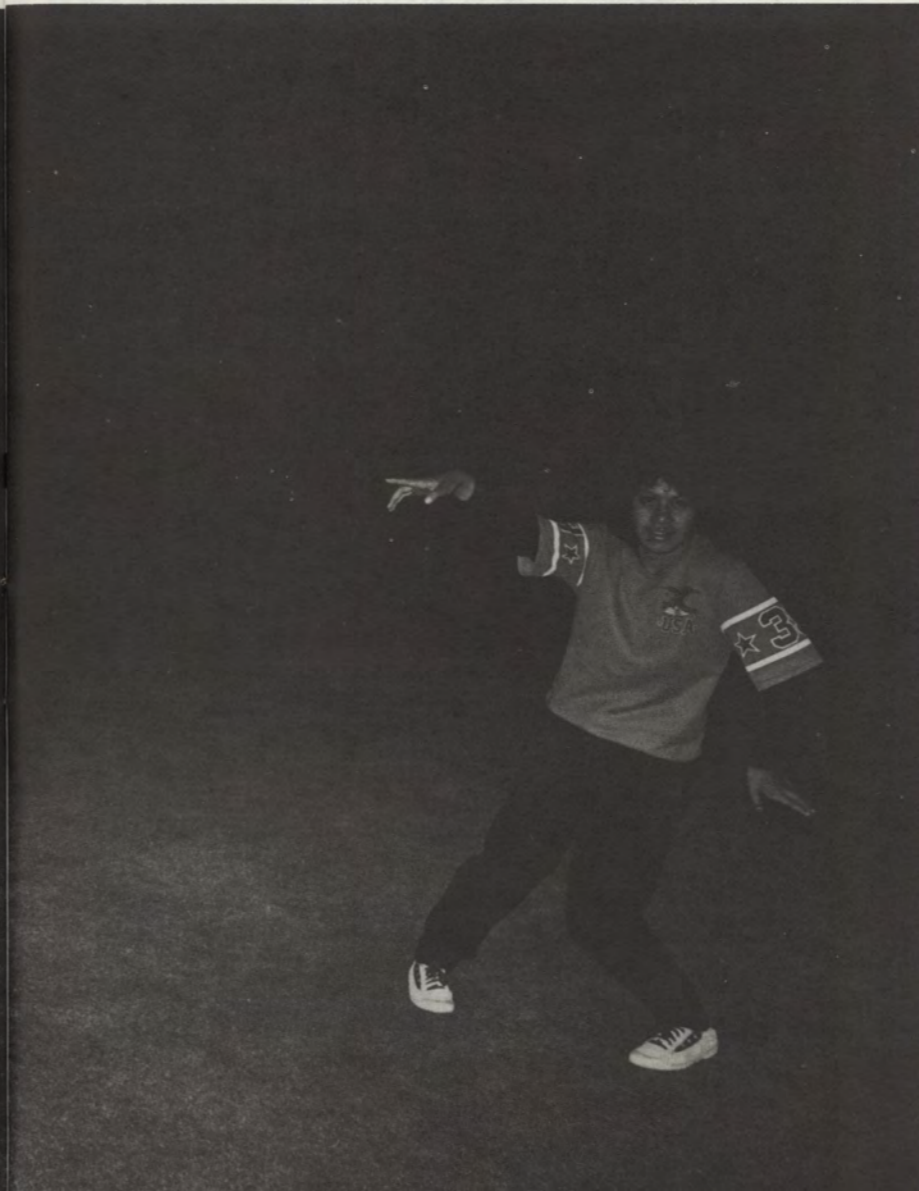


DOING THE UNTHINKABLE . . . DANCING RIGHT OUT IN THE STREET.

# ***IS BEAUTIFUL***

"You dance in your own world, no one can touch you, you dance for your own survival, if you don't dance you die. If we don't get up and move we will die as a race . . . you look around you and see that one is dancing and that one too and that one — your dance is beautiful and you're beautiful too."

# ***BEAUTIFUL TOO***



■ Lower Hutt.

# EVERYONE THOUGHT PETELO WAS CRAZY

this crazy Samoan wiggling his body like a rubber snake, him and his cousins jerking about like puppets. What gives, who is this guy, what's he trying to prove? Wellington late 1982 and everyone who rubbed up against Petelo's new dance sort of politely moved on. Good one, Petelo, see ya . . . later.

CHAPTER THREE CHAPTER  
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CHAPTER THREE CHAPTER

Petelo had just spent a bit of time back in Samoa where the whole island was filled to overflowing with the bop — not too much break, mostly bop. It had trickled down from America where about 40,000 Samoans live, through to American Samoa, and spilled across to Western Samoa where Petelo picked up on the excitement, and plunged into learning a few moves . . . could hardly wait to show off the dance back home, inject a bit of that excitement into Wellington streets . . . it went down like a lead balloon.

Stuck there in Wellington with his special dance and with no-one wanting to know, Petelo had thoughts of giving up — but in Auckland and all round the country other Samoan kids were

doing the same thing — bringing back a few moves, trying them out on home ground. All of them, Petelo included, stayed with it, gradually improved, won over a few mates and by the time television videos came along there was already a handful of committed boppers. Flash Dance the movie pushed it a bit and then That's Incredible arrived and it took off.

A few weeks after the programme the only place to be was out on the street with your sound, and all over Auckland if you looked hard you'd catch kids starting off at ground zero — burning with the embarrassment of showing yourself in public, doing the unthinkable, dancing right out there on the street.



DANCING RIGHT THERE

THERE ON THE STREET.

For kids whose creed had been to keep their heads down it wasn't easy: Petelo remembers standing in line with his mates and daring each other to go first . . . you go, . . . no, you go first . . . looking silly. Texas from the Galaxy Boppers got out on Hamilton's streets for the first time with the team and they all just stood there and sat down — the guys were too whakamaa to do anything. "We had to break the shame."



Wellington.

# BREAKING THE SHAME

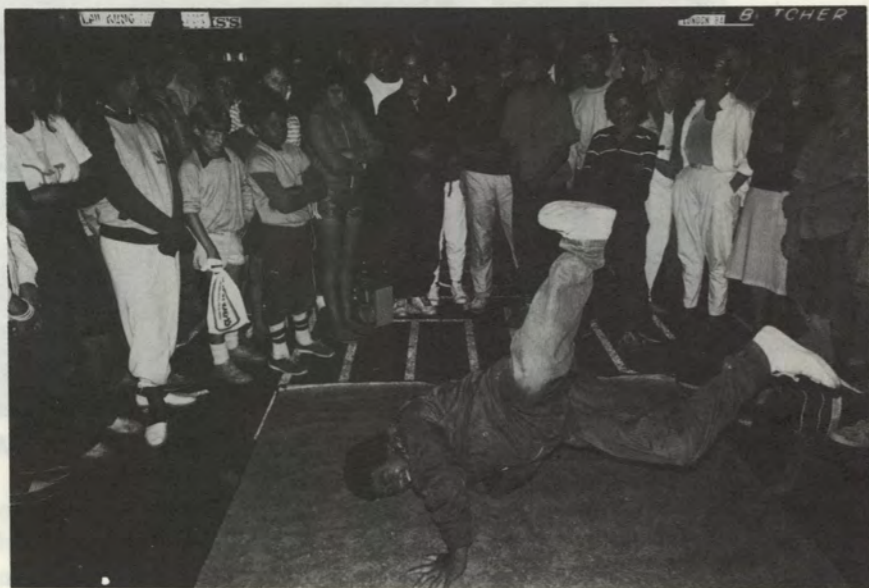
PEOPLE DANCING IN THE STREET. LIFE IS GOOD. WILD AND SWEET.

# FEEL PROUD

Anyway, soon enough everyone started coming into town and it was that much easier to break the shame . . . not stuck out on a limb by yourself but in there together. Kids from all over meeting up, making new friends, forming teams — in Auckland on any Friday night from late '83 onwards hundreds of boppers would be doing their stuff in Aotea Square.

Rain, hail or shine, there'd be three big challenges going down all at once . . . fizzed up boppers bursting to show their talent, you'd feel excited like an electric current was running through you and running through the crowd, in amongst all your mates there was no room for shame.

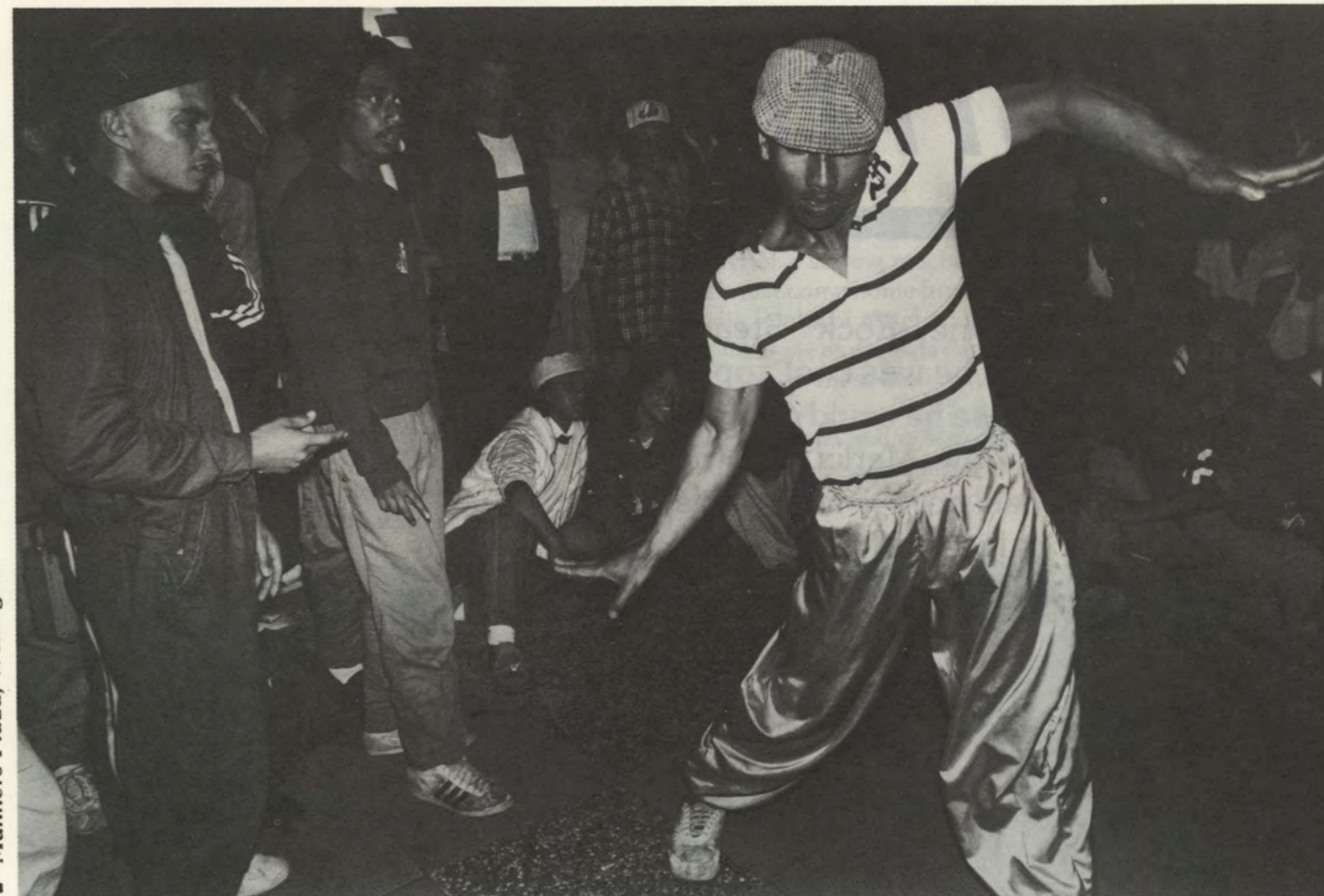
# BURSTING TO SHOW



Wellington.

PEOPLE DANCING IN THE STREET, LIFE IS GOOD, WILD AND SWEET . . .

FIZZED UP, BURSTING TO SHOW YOUR TALENT — MAKING THE STREET COME ALIVE.



Manners Plaza, Wellington

# YOUR TALENT

AFRIKA BAMBATTA ■ AFRIKA BAMBATTA ■ AFRIKA BAMBATTA

The dance the kids picked up on had been going for at least ten years, sweeping around the ghetto streets of the Bronx and Upper Manhattan. This guy Kool Herc is reckoned to have kicked street-dance off around 1974 — he was a mobile DJ in the West Bronx and he'd set up his sound gear in the street, gather a crowd, make up a party and urge them on to dance — heaps of time the party would break up into a riot because the street gangs couldn't lay the old action to one side.

Then this other DJ, Afrika Bambaataa got into the act — he was the leader of a community

group called Zulu Nation that wanted to bring peace to the ghettos. So, wherever Bambaataa was spinning his discs, his dance crew the Zulu Kings would be getting into some bop and break. Then, the break was just a whole lot of foot movements inspired by James Brown's song Get on the Good Foot. Later the Rock Steady Crew which took over from Zulu Kings worked into break a whole new level of dance — all the acrobatics, headspins, yoga and mime. They brought peace, pulled it out of their hearts, put it on the street.

# FROSTY FREEZE

**IN 1983 . . .** **19 YEAR OLD LEADER**  
**ROCK STEADY . . .**

one Rock Steady dancer thought he was cool, top of the heap because he could do eight headspins in a row. Merlin from the Megazoids can do 14, no trouble and heaps of kids can beat eight.

. . . "I don't care what other dances come around, breaking is it — it all started with backflips in the sandlots of Central Park — we would practise acrobatics, gymnastics and parallel bar stuff in the sand." Just like every bop team over here, they slowly took the stuff they learned into the streets, to back up Bambaataa, get everyone into dance.



■ *United Boppers, Otara.*

THOSE HOURS OF PRACTISE,

Yeah, by Christmas 1983 Petelo was no longer out in the cold, all over the North Island things were running red hot. Teams, uniforms, competitions, thousands turning out to watch, even small towns like Murupara had four solid teams, girls were getting into it too — the kids had been cooped up at school all year and now there was a summer of bop to lose yourself in — people dancing in the street, life is good wild and sweet, let the music take control.

**You could dance forever.**

# MEGAZOIDS

Dawn O'Dea is mother to the Megazoids and she's got a sewing machine in the living room — she's just come home from work and she's feeding whole hunks of glittering satiny material through the machine as if her life depended on it. Merlin get your feet off those patterns zzzz Junior, keep your mouth shut zzzz. Her living room is full of this turquoise stuff and in between sewing and cutting and folding she's keeping a sharp eye on all these boppers who flick, spin and jiggle over everything.



INSIDE THREE DAYS THE COMPETITION, AND THOSE UNIFORMS GOT TO BE READY.

■ *Megazoids, Onehunga, Auckland.*

## FLICK — JIGGLE — BOP

The kids are nervous which makes it worse . . . inside three days the Megazoids, headed by Troy O'Dea, will hit the first national bop championships and those six uniforms gotta be ready — the old ones have been thrashed to death and the word is Hamilton's got some cool gear.

# TROY...

has written up a routine for the first part of the competition on Friday which decides who's the best bop team in Auckland and there's maybe 100 — 200 individual body moves each team member has to keep track of — you've got to have a written routine at competition level — you go off the rails if you don't.



PRACTISE... UNTIL EVERYONE'S GOT IT PERFECT.

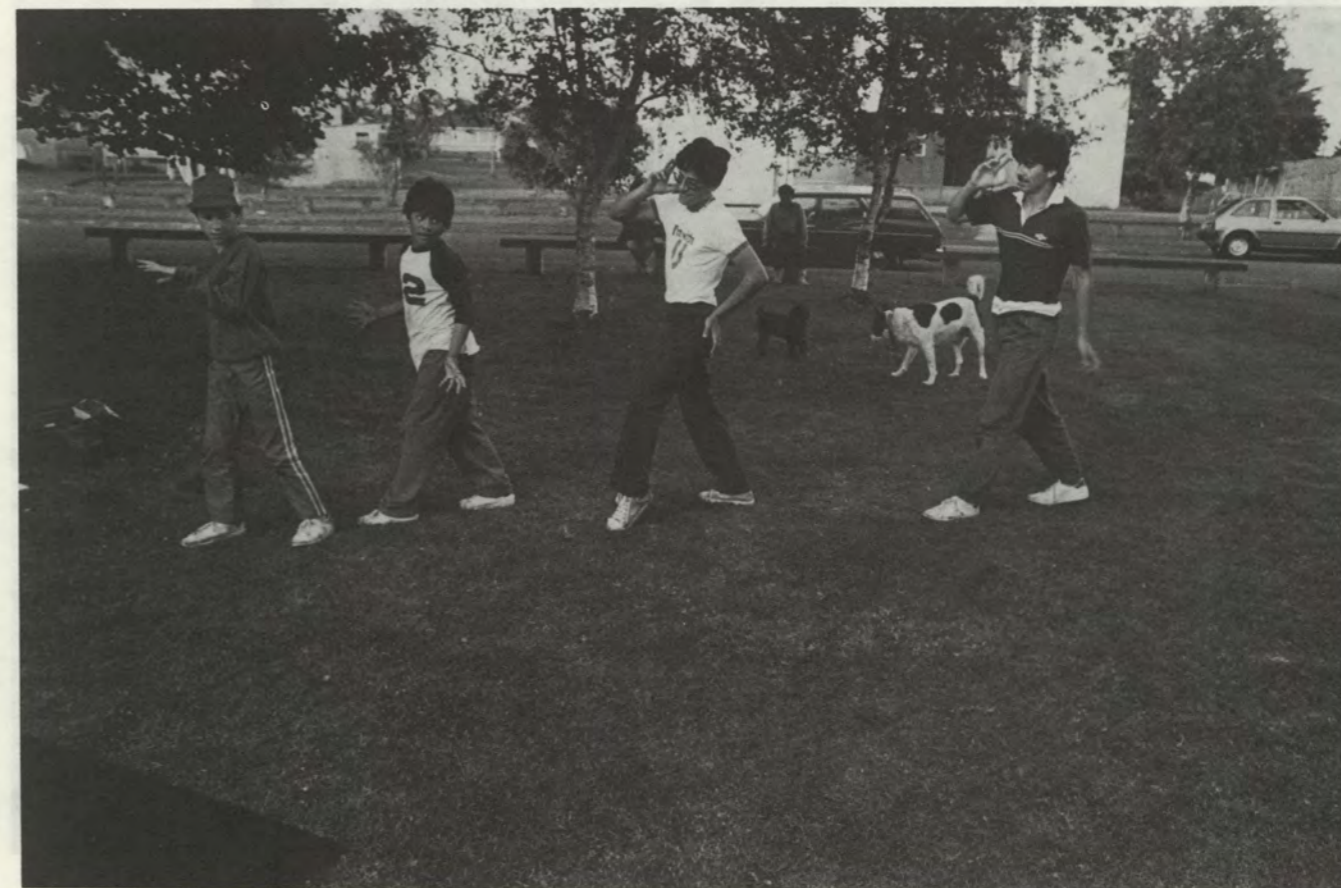
# THE ROUTINE...

You can write up a routine anyway you like but Troy breaks it up into background moves and foreground moves. He keeps the back line moving, changing while others get out front and do individual moves. It can take a week to write a good routine, figuring out the best combination of moves, and who's best at doing them. Troy: "You got to keep the moves coming fast and furious to leave the audience stunned especially if it's half-way through the night, no more than four minutes for a competition. Everyone must know every move so they can get out front and take over straight away. Head out just as he's finishing, don't wait till he's finished and heading back into line, and don't look at each other look at the audience or the judge, that's why you're there."

FOREGROUND	BACKGROUND
1. Entry	1. Entry
2. Bop/backspin — Junior.	2. Lockcar.
3. Spin, legs behind head — Merlin, Jason.	3. Pistons.
4. Dolphins — Mairi, Troy, Dave.	4. Connection wave.
5. Bop routine — all do it.	5. Bop routine.
6. Flashdance, ultimate crazy legs, flic flac-Troy.	6. Nasty.
7. Headspin — Merlin.	7. Nasty.
8. Skipping — Dave, Mairi, Troy, Jason.	8. Slaps.
9. Handspins — Troy, Jason, Merlin.	9. Hand jive.
10. Bop — Dave, Mairi.	10. Routine bop.
11. Rocks — Jason, Troy, Merlin.	11. Hand jive.
12. Doubledrop, drop, neckspring — Dave, Troy	12. Routine bop.
13. Helicopter — Dave, Jason.	13. Finish.

# GOT TO FINE TUNE

anyway the Megazoids are outside practising... there's a sort of warm-up first with each team member concentrating on building his weak moves, fine tuning his good ones. Jason gets into the headspin... time after time without pause he pushes himself up into headstand, juggles his balance and whips his skinny legs around — 12 spins is his record. Merlin and Junior get into the headspin too — all three bone up on the rockpeller, relax with the backspin. Jason can do 34 rockpellers.



THERE'S MAYBE 200 BODY MOVES EACH TEAM MEMBER HAS TO KEEP TRACK OF.

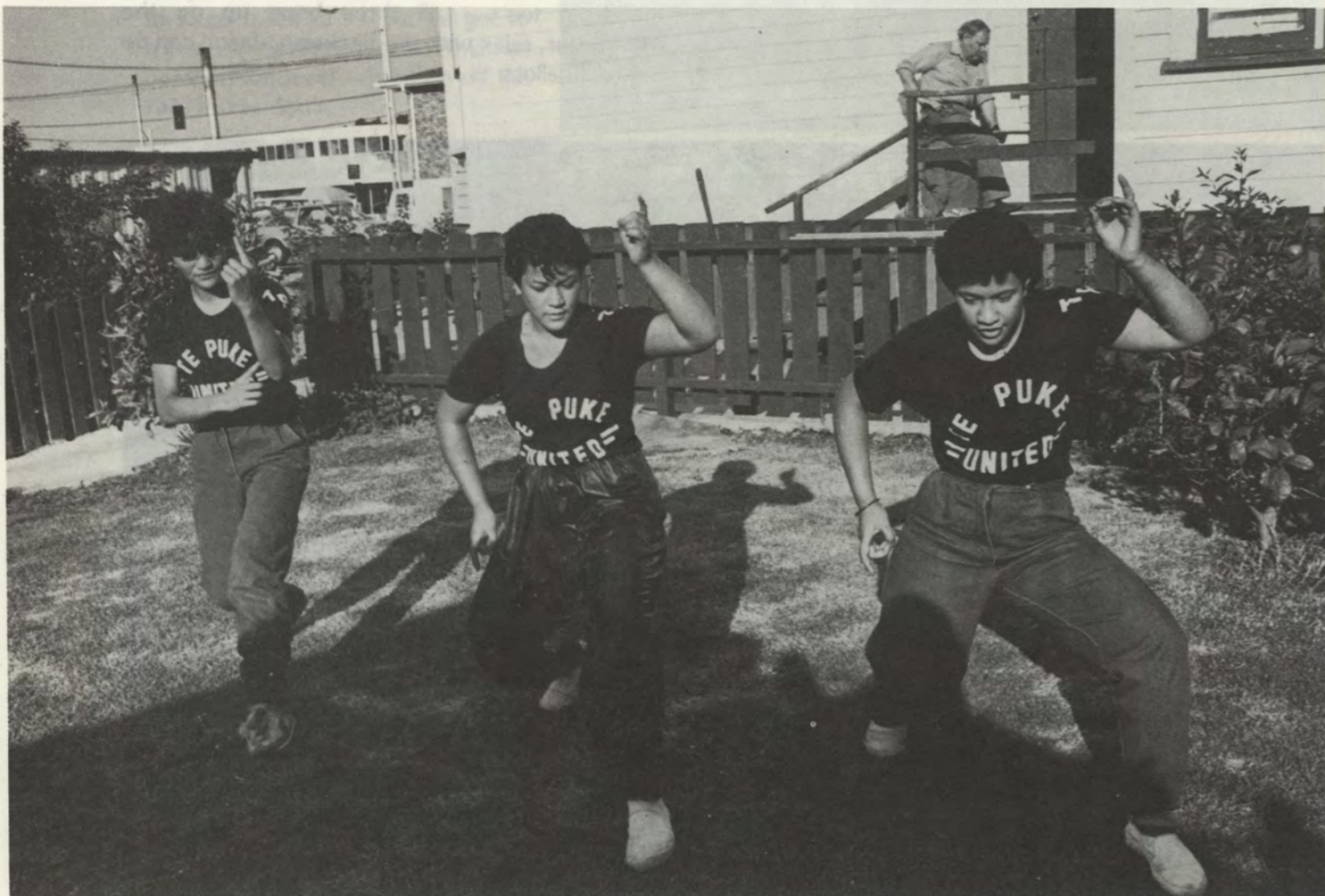
It's hard hard work pushing your body and your mind against what seems physically impossible but each success makes you push harder — doing it together with good friends — the bruises, the physical pain and the discipline of doing the same routine over and over again doesn't seem to matter. With the routine running smooth as golden syrup the Megazoids have a go at a couple of new moves — for the 2nd part of the competition, the challenge on Saturday night.

Next day across Auckland another team, Te Puke United is doing much the same thing as the Megazoids — out the back — rehearsing for the competition. It's an Auckland team but Kirsten and Blackie both came from Te Puke. That's how come they got their name.

... **THEY**

# MOVE SOFT SLIPPERY

IT'S LIKE THREE ARE ONE.

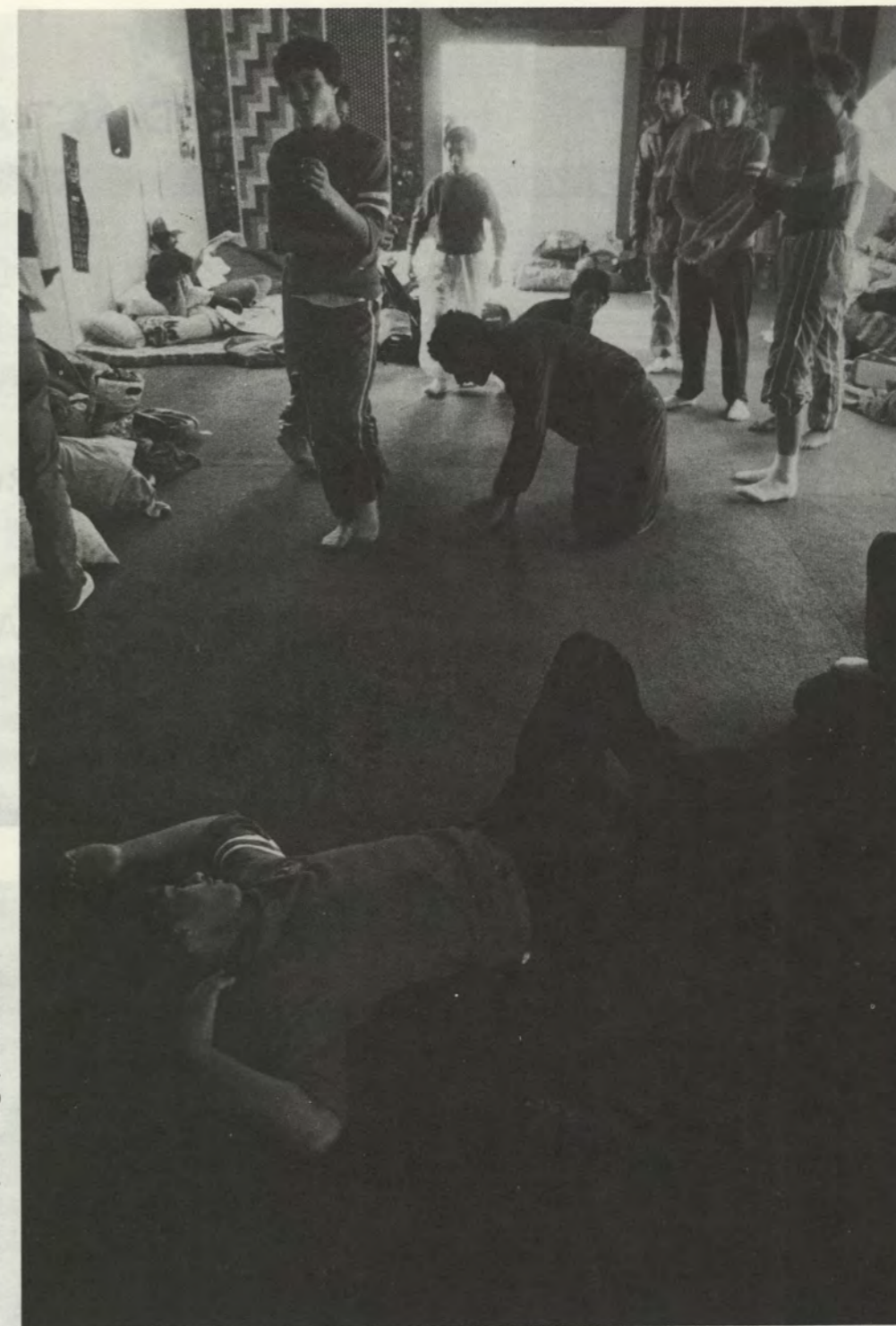


TPU, Sandringham, Auckland.

BOP HAS KNOCKED THE OLD IDEAS — WOMEN HAVE THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE — OUT THERE AS EQUALS.

Kirsten, Blackie and Jinx line up single file next to the clothes-line. On the count of nine they slip into their prepared routines, Jinx is the specialist in break but the real strength of the group is how smooth and graceful they connect up their moves — they ripple and move so soft and slippery it's like three are one. Kirsten's little boy, Martin, watches from the kitchen steps, he's into bop too . . . got a mother to be proud of.

In Hamilton, in Wellington and in Auckland hundreds of boppers are all working on their practices ready for the first ever national championship.



Rutherford High, Auckland.

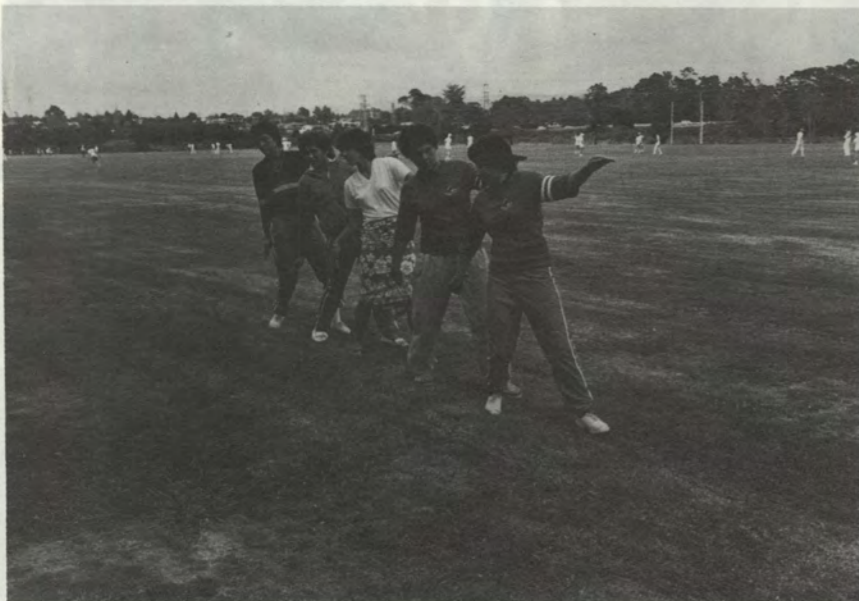
EARLY MORNING MARAE FEELING, BEDDING, BREAKFAST, DISHES . . . SOFT BUBBLING OF TALK. AT HOME.

It's Saturday morning, a clean sharp summer morning and tucked in the middle of a whole lot of deserted school buildings out at Rutherford High the whare wananga there slowly stirs to life. At least sixty boppers are doing early morning marae chores, rolling up bedding, setting out tables, helping with breakfast, there's a soft bubbling of talk — getting the job done, having a good time. The boppers are up from Wellington for the competition and right after a breakfast of porridge and scrambled eggs with bacon they head on to a patch of field to work out new moves to match the Auckland action.



GOT TO MATCH THE AUCKLAND ACTION.

Wellington's Buffalo Girls, Rutherford.



IDEAS  
FLOW  
THROUGH  
THEIR  
BODIES  
LIKE AN  
ENDLESS  
WAVE

READY FOR  
THE  
BIG NIGHT



Twilite Thrillz, Rutherford.

IDEAS FLOW ..... ALMOST WITHOUT ANYTHING BEING SAID.

Twilite Thrillz come up with a sort of dolphin crossed with a rocking horse that they all do linked together — they work through it, trying to piece the idea together . . . the pleasure of a brand new move with 10 guys locking onto it. No-one stops, no-one pauses, going hard at it until lunch . . . the dedication, the skill, the unity.



Rutherford.

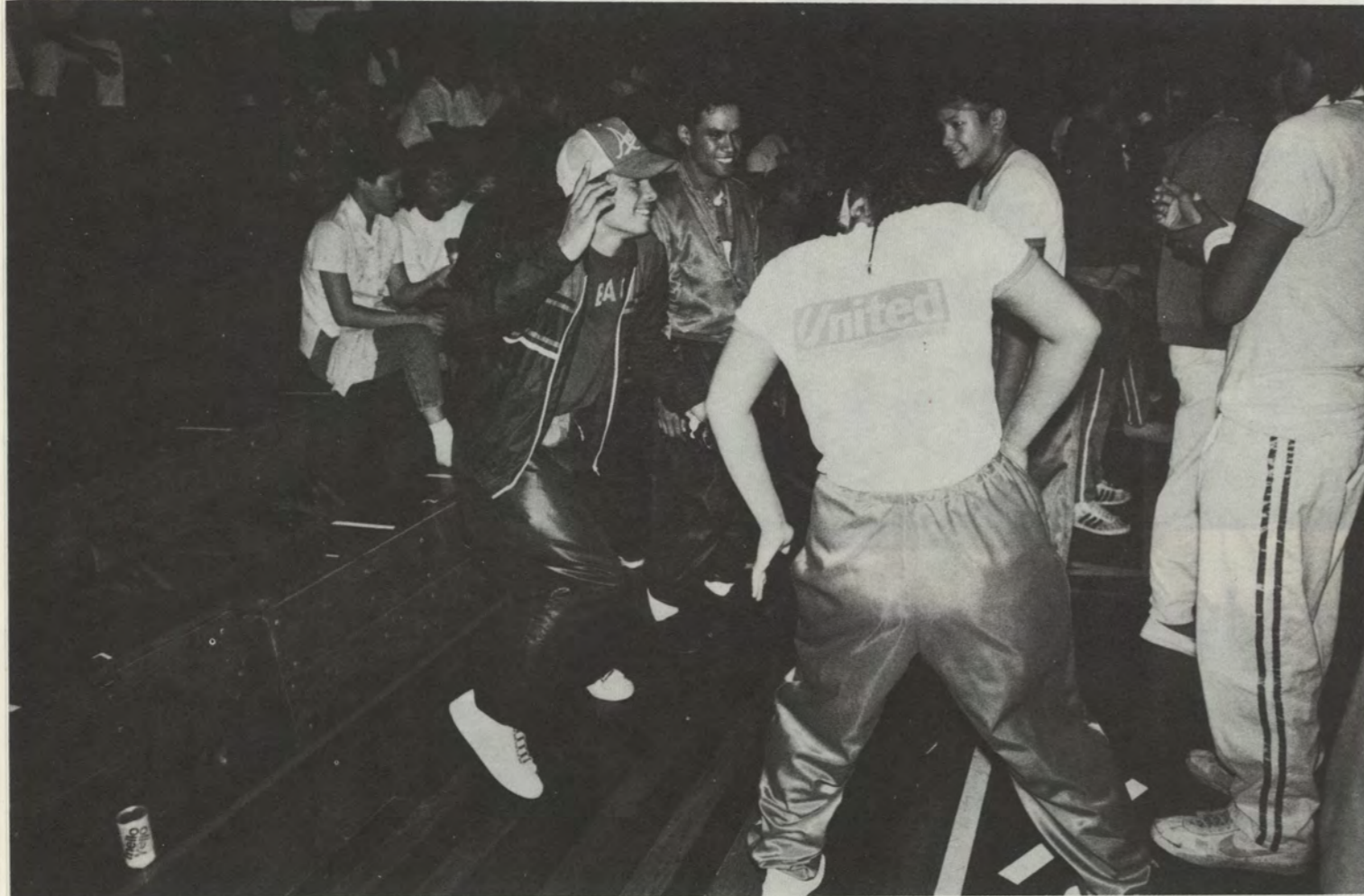
HAKA ..... HUGS OF UNITY



Competition, Auckland.

The big night and walking into the hall is like walking into an electric power station — the whole place is buzzing, vibrating — there's a huge current in there. All this time out on the street, all the hard work, all the talk about who's best and tonight on the floor in front of thousands the top teams will put their dance on the line.

■ Competition, Auckland.

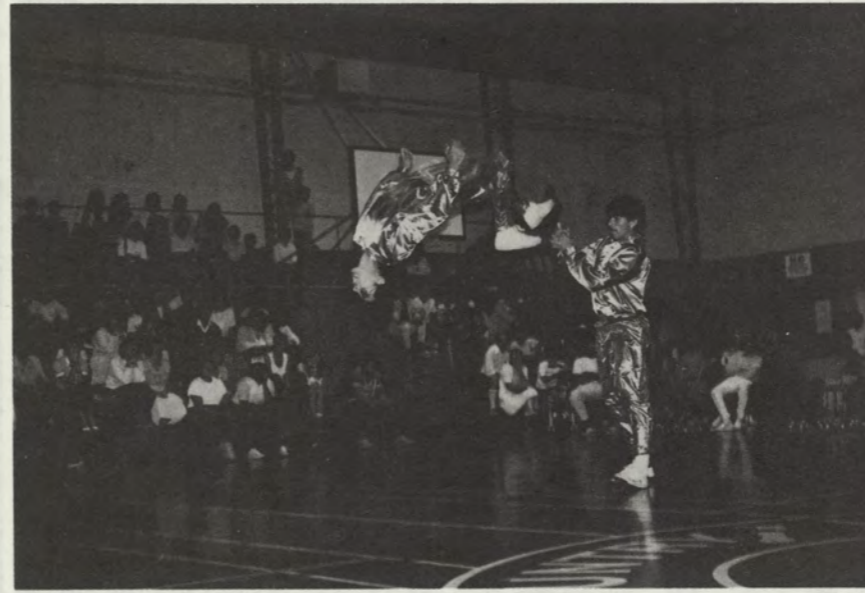


The night is about ready to go and all the teams are piling into each other to say hello. Handshakes, hugs of unity . . . the crowd goes crazy shrieking and whistling . . . the music booms out.

There's crashing, distorted, freaky music blasting out from the stage, like a Starwars battleship going in for the attack — laser fire, thrusters, heavy rumbles. Hamilton has arrived and the word was right — their uniforms are choice — decked out in deep shiny blue, sashes, stars — Galaxy Boppers have got their names written on the chest. Excalibur, Flash, Glide, Texas . . . they got shiny satin knee length britches with bright red stockings — space age warriors. They're cool and calm, biding their time to hit the floor.

■ Competition, Auckland.

# PROUD . . . SHARP . . .



# SPACE AGE WARRIORS



THE CROWD GOES CRAZY.

no hide behind school desks all day are out  
possible  
dramming in applause.

Everywhere, these guys who hide behind school desks all day are out there as heroes pulling off impossible moves — drowning in applause.



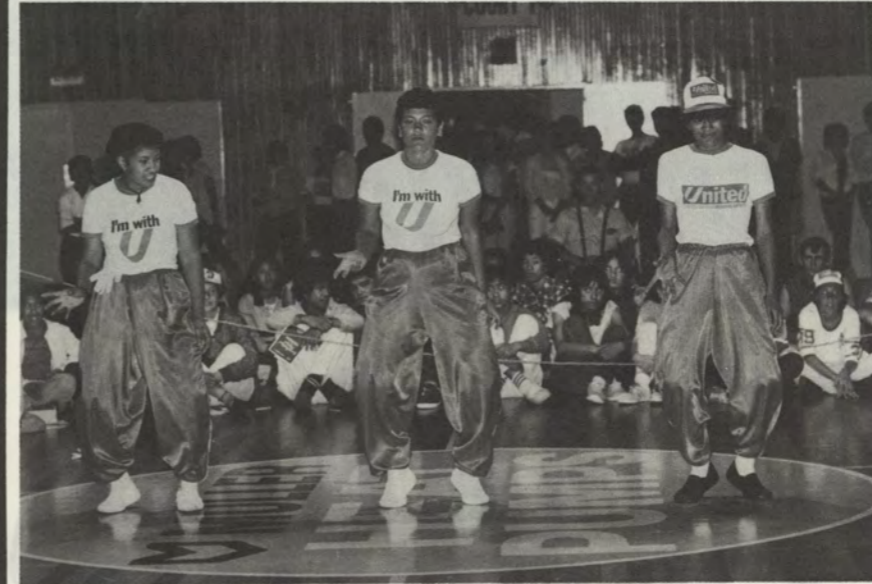
Petelo's Kinetic Energy step out . . . they're tight, disciplined and their moves work — lots of amazing bop . . . so many different rhythms from so many different parts of the body. Twilite Thrillz get into it, they have a hard act to follow but those new moves from Rutherford will do it.

The Hi Sonics from Hamilton take-over with a range of spacey moves, they get into all sorts of complicated acrobatics, working as a team . . . fast and sharp. Anyway a body could be moved it's moved. It's hard to believe these guys are made from flesh and blood.

The Galaxy Boppers burst onto the floor, they don't hesitate, they know their floor — you got to know your floor — perfect headspins, going from backspins into rockpellor. Light bouncy confidence in their matador's gear.

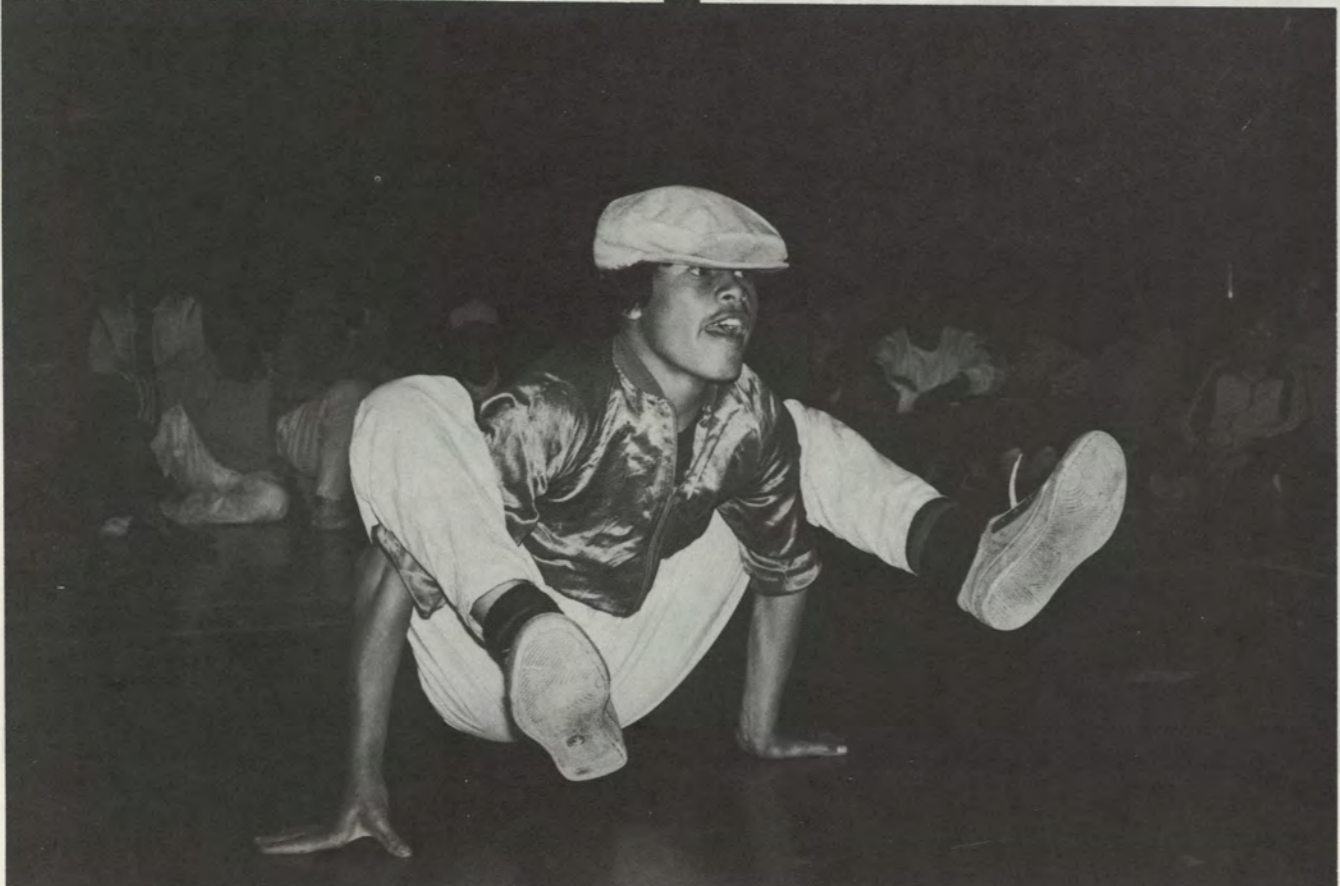
The challenge goes on — Wellington is doing a handspin on a soft drink can, another heads out with a lighter and handspins on that. Auckland huddles — Jason gets the nod, heads out and does a headspin on the soft drink can — almost every move causes some physical pain but that's ridiculous and dangerous — spinning on top of your head on top of a soft drink can on a wooden floor — one slip and you've broken your neck. Each new moves brings a fresh wave of crazy sound from the crowd. Wellington takes the can does a headspin on it and drops off into a backspin. Got Auckland beat there. Now they're out there with the crab, the back flip . . . Troy is holding onto all his really good moves but they've still got Wellington beat. Now there's Hamilton blasting into their stuff.

# TALENT



It's sweat, sweat and more sweat out there and it's tension inside; Auckland have to move fast to meet the moves Hamilton's laying on the floor — who's the best at rockpellor, who do we get out there to beat that — Troy fights the challenge like an old card shark . . . knows exactly what to pull out and when.

Auckland and Hamilton are more or less level pegging then Troy sees them . . . sends out Dave and Jason for a helicopter — Hamilton answers with three pairs doing the helicopter, they spring back off the floor all light footed and sure they've aced Auckland but Troy has got that double helicopter up his sleeve . . . Dave gets up and walks round with two spinning boppers on his head . . . the crowd is up on it's feet . . . Troy hits in with the skip, his forward somersaults pow pow pow . . . everyone knows Auckland's got it sewn up.



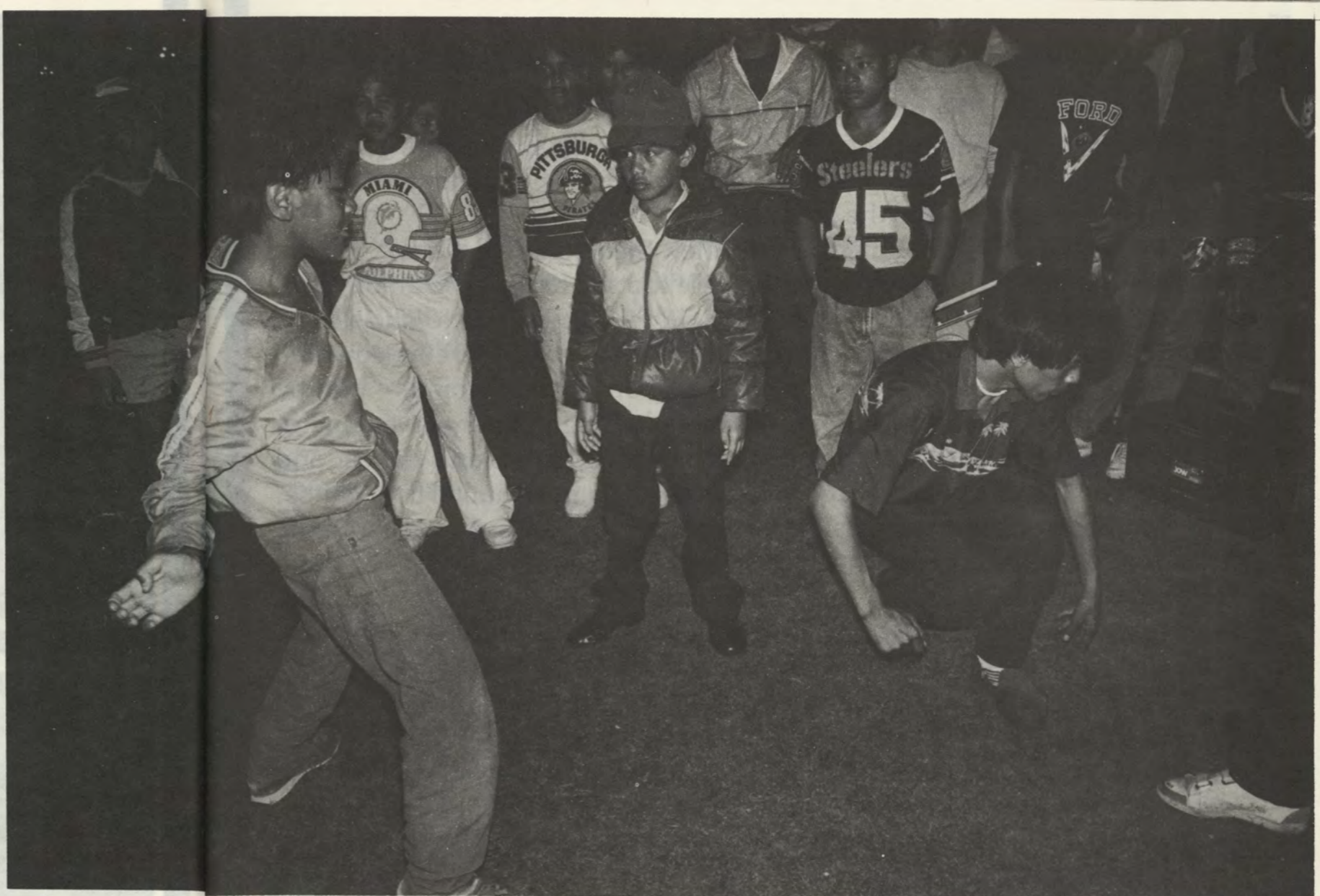
Antony Squares Auckland



BOP WILL ALWAYS BE ON THE STREET WHERE IT WAS BORN.

United Bopper, Otara.

GETTING A FIX ON ALL THOSE NEW MOVES, UNWINDING IN THE SQUARE.



Aotea Square, Auckland.

# COMMUNITY OF KIDS

TIED UP IN THEIR DANCE  
■ IN EACH OTHER.

# BORN ON THE STREET

The crowd, the kids, the dancers are still worked up . . . and people move down to Aotea — there on the grass beside the town hall hundreds of boppers are trying to get a fix on all the new moves from the night — they're all tied up in each other, tied up in the dance.

A whole community of kids hard at it, all know each other and all the energy from the night slowly unwinding in the square. There's a rush of talk . . . catching up on each other, a whole intense world of their own to keep track of.

That weekend and that competition was just one of many happening all over the country — while bop will always be on the streets where it began, kept there by the new kids starting out — organised competitions in 1984 were it.

All of a sudden, competitions and challenges were breaking out all over the place but some people reckoned things were happening too fast — that there was a danger in the kids being organised by others. They argued that bop had been taken off the streets where it was born, had lost some of its unity — the boppers became too competitive and wouldn't show their moves to

others on the street.

The manager of Auckland's Video Village Rockers says the promoters and the money-makers have got into the act — they're saying to the kids let us control your fun. Typical story is \$3 at the door for 300 kids and a \$50 prize at the end of the night — teams only getting paid if they win.

He figures one day, while a big glittering competition is going down, some little kid will start up at the bottom of Queen St and everyone will say, hey, look at this kid and bop will start up in the street again, where people can see it for free.

A WHOLE NEW FEELING OF HAND MOVEMENTS, SOFT GENTLE BODY WAVES

In amongst all the growth a few things have come out . . . for a start girls teams are getting big. At Hamilton, TPU and Tuau Boppers got down after the main challenge and did their own stuff — everyone gathered to watch, and the girls stole the show.

When the dance first hit, the girls knew their so-called place — on the sideline watching . . . they'd say they were too shy to dance in amongst all those strutting males. But bop has knocked those old ideas to one side — through bop they've found their rightful place . . . out there as equals.

Also, in the rush to get on top of break, bop was left behind — but the few teams who stayed with bop and Petelo's Kinetic Energy was one of them, turned out new combinations of moves, added island dance, and come up with some amazing eye-fooling tricks, some beautiful fluid dance.

More importantly the girls' teams took hold of bop and gave it a whole new feel. Brought to bop an easy, stable, feminine flow — lots of hand movements done together, soft gentle body waves — gave out a quiet dignity against the rooster strut of break.

# THE GIRLS TOOK HOLD OF



A WHOLE NEW FEEL, LOTS OF HAND MOVEMENTS, SOFT GENTLE BODY WAVES.

There should be a balance between break and bop with all kinds of new influences thrown in — maybe a bit of haka, a bit of taiaha work, maybe some sa sa . . . even get a bit of poi into it. One thing . . . the dance has to keep moving to stay alive.

And there can be no argument that competitions in the meantime have helped keep it that way — heaps of competitions, challenges all over the place organised by just ordinary people out there who know what the kids are on to and who work hard to fill the gap.



All over . . . in Wairoa the Kaukau family and a group of parents ran a bop night which drew 500 people. Whakatane has regular competitions and there are more than 20 teams in the town. At Murupara, Polly Beattie who runs the bop club there held a night to raise money for the teams, 300 turned up. In Frankton the Kerapas opened a club for the local boppers. Waru Hamiora, a Rotorua forest ranger, saw the kids . . . put two and two together and has organised all kinds of venues. In Hamilton, Mark Whaanga, who is like a father to the bop groups, works almost full-time getting things together for the kids.

All over just ordinary people, all by themselves, out of their hearts are meeting little by little, a bit here, a bit there . . . meeting the needs of those forgotten kids. You got to take your hats off to them.

# BOP . . . GAVE THE BOP A SPECIAL FEEL.

Sometimes, though, opportunities to give boppers a helping hand to appreciate their tanga a little more aren't being taken. One example of the problem and the possibility is the pakeha-style silver cups the kids are busting their guts to win . . . those cups have been put there by organisers, but they're made by pakeha factories and they cost Polynesians money. There are heaps of kids learning all sorts of carving skills who would leap at the chance to do a bop trophy — and the boppers would be learning to value something that was truly theirs.

© Galaxy Images

In the meantime a couple of Auckland teams have got together to take hold of the dance and run it the way they want — to organise things themselves — that way you really learn something, get to know your own strength.

The G Force Rockers, TPU, Titan Saints and the Megazoids came up with their answer . . . set about doing their own thing entirely and they set their sights high . . . a Boppalympics at Mt Smart stadium with gold medals and a \$2000 first prize.

■ Maire, at Hamilton competition.



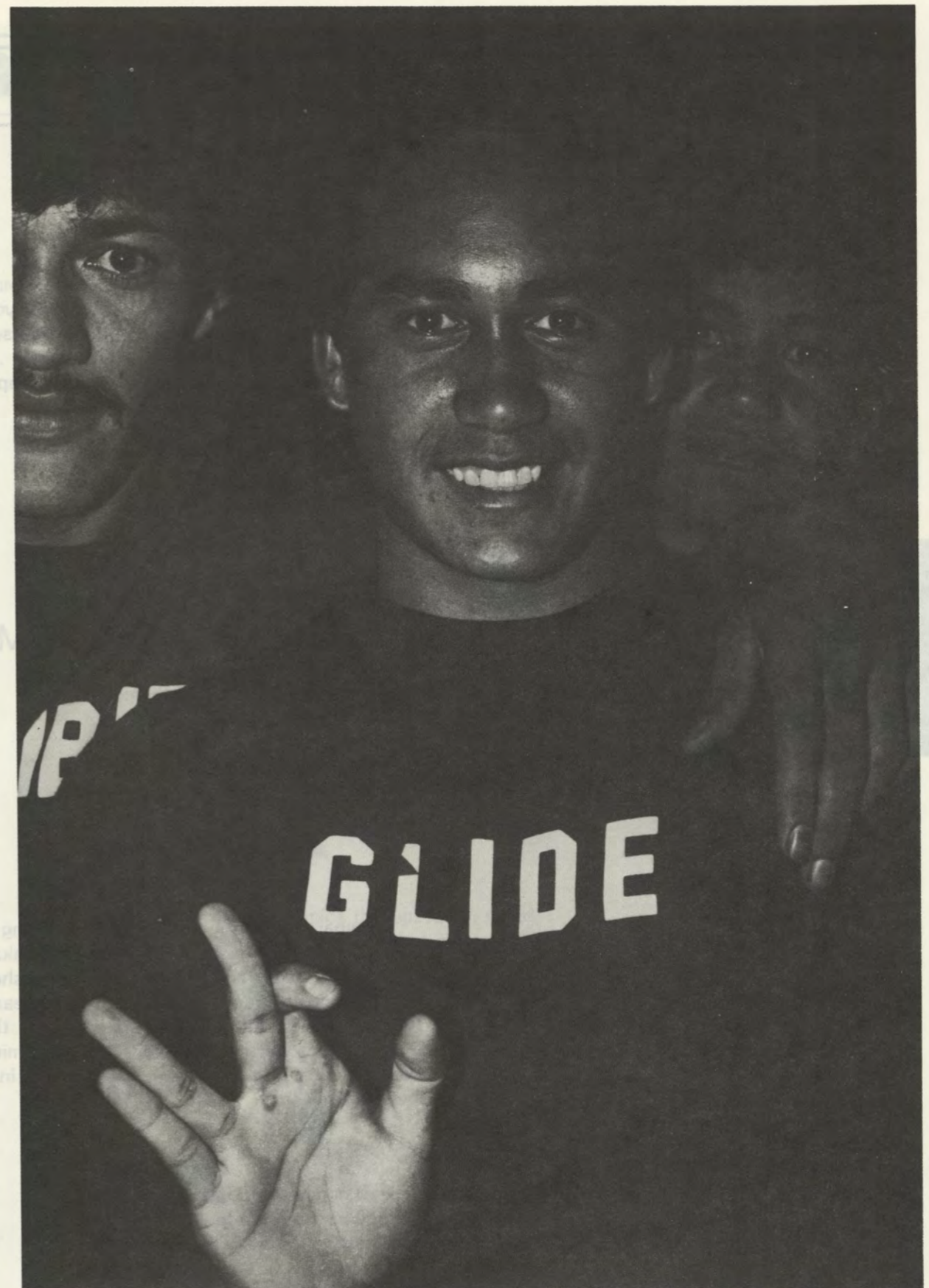
the biggest, boldest piece of bop action ever. The organising teams wouldn't be entering, they were doing it as a gift for their brothers and sisters.

Seeing the size of their dream you couldn't help thinking it would never get off the ground but nobody could stop them from shooting for the stars and through an organisation they set up, Mana Rangatahi O Aotearoa, they got into it.

## THERE'S POWER IN OUR DANCE

Estimates of the crowd vary from 4000 to 7000 and the day out at Mt Smart was eye-popping-top quality sound, big stage, more boppers than you've seen anywhere, Ardijah giving out music — and everywhere that community of young people quietly congratulating themselves — today is our day, man — as far as the eye can see it is us out there.

It's truly ours — our brothers and sisters got this together, did everything — the judging, the sponsorship, police liason, the stage, security, sound, looking after visiting boppers from all over the country — yeah, our brothers and sisters did this — look at those medals shine and everyone gets a prize for doing their dance. Yeah, there's a power in that crowd — our power. Us.



■ Galaxy Bopper.

## OUR POWER . . . US

# WELCOME

# WELCOME

... It's nice having you here, it's good having you . . . this is your marae, no matter where you come from, this is your marae . . . make yourself at home, make yourselves free and easy . . . that's how we like to see it, see you young people here . . .

With the welcome over it was back to getting things right for everybody . . . there's heaps to do — watercress, brisket in the coolroom, piles of potatoes, cooking, bedding, setting the tables — heaps of work, heaps of people.

**YOU KIDS  
ARE WELCOME  
HERE**

A whare-kai full of boppers were drinking in their welcome to Nga Tai E Rua marae in Tuakau — around 50 years ago Princess Te Puea pushed for a building programme at the marae and in early 1984 a whole lot of boppers up for the Boppalympics were hanging on every welcoming word . . . learning the history of the marae into the bargain.

More people than work to go around and everybody getting into it — a rush of hands to spread paper over the tables, more hands than paper. A whole lot of guys into peeling potatoes, washing watercress . . . all these boppers locking on to the spirit — helping out not so much to get the job done but helping out to show we're in this together . . . peeling those potatoes, a gift of love for your brothers and sisters. A feeling of peace.

Like the Boppalympics the operation there was done totally by boppers — that night, with dinner cleared and with a video in the corner of the whare-kai to entertain our visitors everyone got into their dance, their singing — got into just being together.

Dropping off to sleep in the whare-nui under photographs of the marae's tipuna, falling asleep under the stars and out of sight the Waikato river sliding gently past . . . cuddled up to your mates telling stories about bop, about videos, about movies — long rich stories about what's important to you. Soft word-perfect bop music waiatas sung by a Samoan and a Maori together. Dropping off to sleep.

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A LOT OF MAORI KIDS HAVE NEVER BEEN WELCOMED ONTO A MARAE . . . FOR THEM IT'S A MIND OF THE PAST.



■ Whare wananga, Rutherford High School, Auckland.

A LOT OF MAORI KIDS HAVE NEVER BEEN WELCOMED ONTO A MARAE FOR THEM IT'S A THING OF THE PAST. THEY ACTUALLY FEAR THE MARAE.



Those kids were lucky to get their welcome — a lot of people who call themselves traditional wouldn't begin to hear of bop on a marae, or at a church meeting.

The result is that Rotorua night — where the local police organise a bop night every Friday called the Blue Light Rage — \$3 to get in the kids learning nothing, gaining nothing from the experience . . . except that their own people aren't there. That Rotorua night with kids on the street and empty maraes all round.



Their people somehow can't say: Look, you are our children, come, be with us on our ground, your ground. Look, we are proud of your dance — be with us.



# EMPTY MARAE



■ Rotorua.

ROTORUA, KIDS ON THE STIEET AND EMPTY MARAE



■ Street kids house, Wellington.

THEY WALK THE STREETS, ASK THE QUESTION WHERE IS OUR MARAE NOW.

# ... EVERYWHERE



It's the sort of thing . . . where at Murupara, Polly Beattie keeps asking the local marae to let her run a bop night there — the answer . . . yeah, yeah, yeah and Polly who is Maori but can't speak Maori is sad for her forgotten kids.



It's where in Wellington Jack & Joanne Eru have set up a house for 30 plus street kids. They walk the streets caring for their children, they ask the question — where is the Pipitea marae now. Back at the house with no food in the fridge and no money to buy any, the forgotten kids, with nothing to go for and with parents who have given up, at least have Jack and Joanne. And yes, the kids are into the bop, like there was nothing else.

THEY ACTUALLY FEAR THE MARAE. . . .

Those forgotten kids everywhere meet a deaf ear and yet it's so easy to open up to them — if a kid's in a corner with his head in a bag of glue you've got your work cut out trying to get him moving. Learn your language, your whakapapa — uh? But that kid has got out of that corner by himself, fighting for recognition with the bop. He's giving you a gift.



For myself, I see bop as a waterfall of sudden energy and love — if people everywhere, Maori elders, Pacific Islander elders, schools, labour departments don't get in and give respect to the kids' achievement and help out, then that waterfall will not lead to a strong flowing river, will not lead to learning, will not lead on to growth — the waterfall will dry up.



Tai and Kelly Pene are Ratana ministers who've got behind the kids through Mana Rangatahi. Kelly has learned to do the bop — has seen the talent of bop either ignored or looted to make money . . . sees there has to be that helping hand.



"Look, as you say there were 50,000 kids in that corner and next year there would have been 100,000 — you can't blame that little guy, he's innocent . . . standing in that corner was his answer — you are giving me nothing, I am nothing. Then by and by along came bop and that little guy says I'm going to give it a go."



■ Megazoid, Onehunga.

THAT KID'S GOT OUT OF THE CORNER HIMSELF, FIGHTING WITH HIS BOP. HE'S GIVING YOU A GIFT.



■ Wellington.

“What we have to do is catch bop, catch the energy before the audience goes, before bop disappears. We have opened our hearts and we are saying you are good man, yeah, you’re good but unless you have help it will be lost — keep your identity, keep your power as a group, keep your bop — but move on to other things as well.”

“Our organisation is talking for the tree until it grows strong by itself — until the little guys in the corner are strong enough to stand out of that corner and stay out.”

“We try to offer financial aid and organisational help — like when we go to ask for a marae to stay on, our very name and because we are ministers . . . which of our old people would turn us down — the doors are opened, but go along and try it with a name like Galaxy Boppers and the door would close faster than you would think.”

Since Kelly talked to me Mana Rangatahi have had problems with one strict-minded traditionalist who said there was no way mana could be linked to rangatahi, to youth.

# CATCH

# THE

# ENERGY

The guts of the problem comes down to two things . . . people can’t see what bop truly means to the kids and they can’t see how to link that gift to other areas of growth — traditional culture, schooling, jobs.

■ Bop Breakdance competition, Porirua.



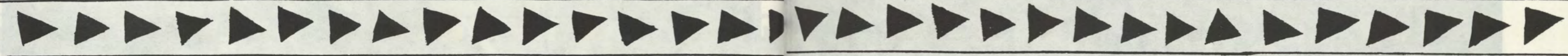
Bop Breakdance competition, Porirua.



I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT. THAT FEELING GOES ROUND 30. 3000 PEOPLE — THERE'S NEVER A LOSER.

Waru Hamiora, the Rotorua forest ranger, at least recognises bop.  
 “. . . O.K. bop isn't traditional dance but it's still Maori dance — it takes a lot of self-discipline and skill to do traditional dance . . . with bop the kids are doing it their own way . . . bop requires a lot of self-discipline and like Maori dance the strength of the individual develops with the group, is tied to the group — he's got to discipline himself, do a certain routine for his mates and do it really well.”  
 “The thing that makes me happy is . . . I've never seen anything like it . . . everybody claps and that feeling goes all around 30 people, 3000 people . . . there's never a loser.”

“There's no Maori involved in the form of the language or the exact dance routines but the dance comes from the heart, it's their expression of arohanui — the spirit is there and the spirit is pure Maori — that is the most important thing.”  
 “Dance is very important to Maoritanga — our whole history is told through a combination of carvings, the spoken word and dance and the big question is, I hope the boppers will apply themselves to their culture the same way they apply themselves to their dance . . . you have to look to your culture, if you're looking to School C for your mana, you're looking the wrong way.”



What Waru talks about has to be a two way thing, it can't be a case of traditional Maori culture waiting for the kids to come their way, Maoritanga has to reach out, do it's share of listening too. We all do.

# LIVING

Peter Sharples, director of Hoani Waititi Marae . . . "there was a time when we did all our living on maraes, when they were our everything, for crying, celebrating, dying, for living, . . . our everything for everybody. The mana of this marae here is brought about by the activities here — by its tangata whenua, the people here, that's how a place earns its mana and we can stand tall here."

# BREATHING

# MARAE

# FOR ALL

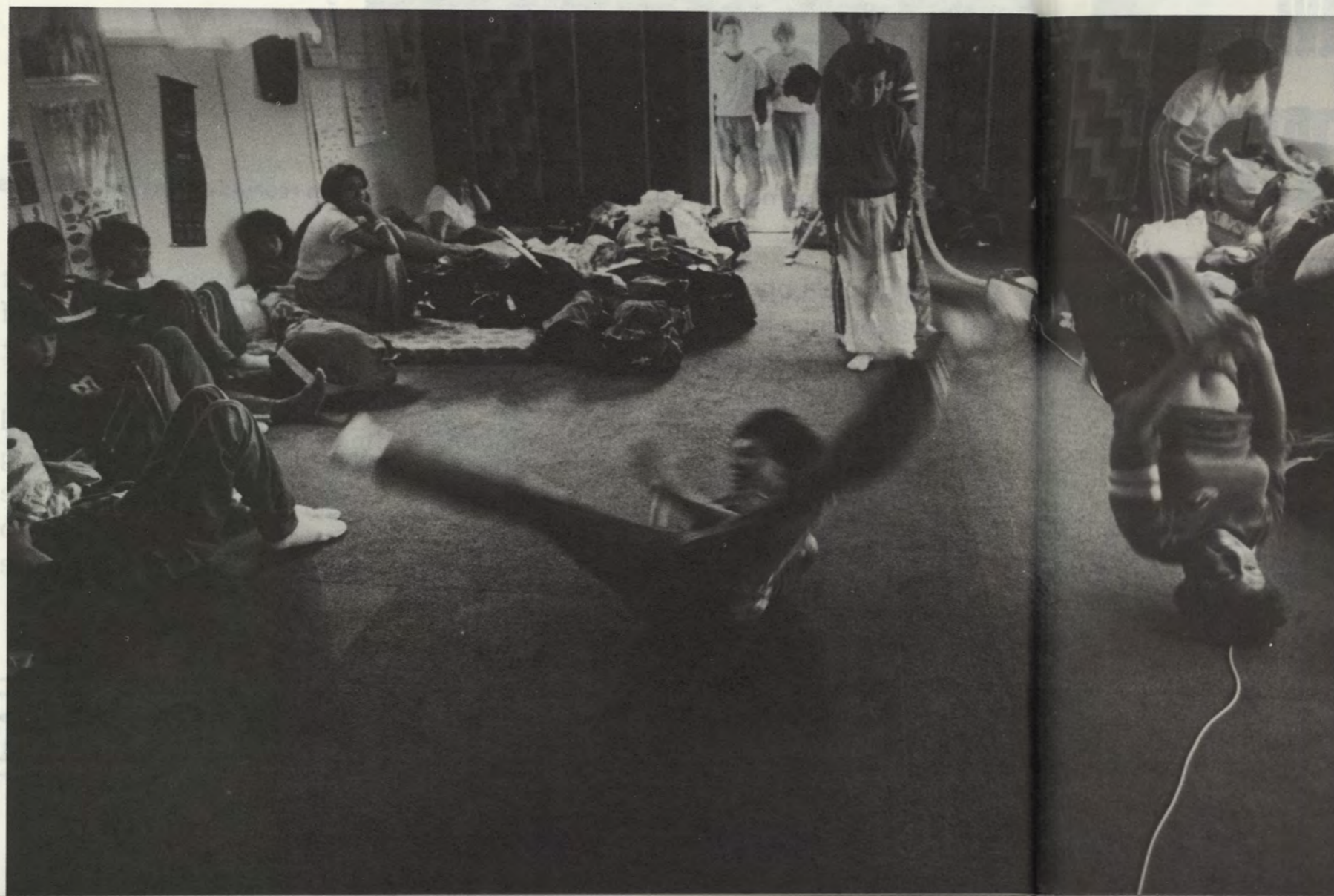
"But a lot of our people have a limited view of what a marae is about — they forget what a marae used to be . . . a living, breathing, changing place for all . . . they can't see that things are different from when they were young and can't see that the new things happening today should have a place on the marae."

"Every culture must adapt to be strong and Maoritanga has been slow in adapting and showing flexibility . . . the bulk of our maraes are existing there just to host the occasional visitors and to cater for local family groups, 21st, tangihanga and so on . . . but maraes must expand their activities for all their people, particularly their young."

"It may be that you have to start with bop . . . work through that to something else. It's not difficult to do . . . a marae could hold a bop evening and run it along Maori lines, that could be the marae's koha to the kids."

"Then, in time, you give the kids the responsibility of doing it — running the whole thing, doing the mihi — the works — give yourselves as a gentle guiding hand."

▲ Rutherford whare wananga.



“There’s nothing in marae etiquette that forbids activities like bop . . . a marae is the natural forum and bop seems like the best way to get those young kids involved in their marae.”

“Take what they’re into and use the marae to support it — they will start to feel . . . this place is choice. You set the climate for people to come on a marae and the boppers will think, man, this place is ours, they will lose their fear — the anchorstone of any marae is a feeling of belonging and if a bop group is marae-based then, choice . . . because just being on a marae is catching, just being on a marae the kids will learn taha Maori — you won’t have to ram it down their throats. They’re ready.”

mana of this marae . . . the activities here — by its tangata whenua . . . ce earns its mana and we can stand tall

A group of street kids taken in by Hoani Waititi Marae wrote Peter a note . . . “From the Ngati Street Kids — we have become part of the family . . . our upwarmest thanks.”

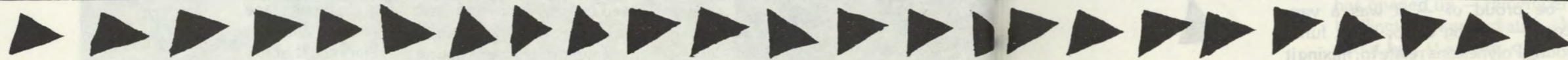
# FROM THE NGATI

# STREET KIDS



A WATERFALL OF ENERGY AND LOVE.

•Otaru, Auckland.



WE HAVE  
BECOME  
PART OF THE  
FAMILY.

They’re ready . . . there is a crying demand out there for Maoridom to recognise the 80s — the success of Poi E is a sure example of that.

Dalvanius: “Maoritanga is NOW and sure while the emphasis on tradition has it’s good points — it has preserved taha Maori . . . sadly they are preoccupied with their idea of tradition with no compromise whatever . . . I look at their sort of maraes and I see they are very empty. At

Hoani Waititi they may bend the so-called rules but their priority is still tradition and that marae is a true living marae . . . it can’t be ignored by the purists.

“You know . . . that it takes a completely alien dance and culture to bring these kids together well, that is stand up evidence that Maoridom has failed — that they can’t relate to the kids and don’t want to.”

# DALVANIUS

# OUR UPWARMEST THANKS



Wellington.

“Our kids shouldn’t be dancing on the street . . . they should be dancing on the maraes — in the whare-nui — all social action should be taken back there — everybody living on that marae as Maoris, 24 hours a day. Maoridom has said no to its children too many times.”

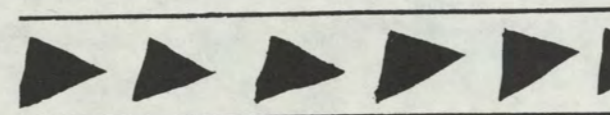
“For me, I’m saying with Poi E to those kids . . . yes, you can have your language on your terms, it’s saying here is your language, this is something to be proud of — it was a very calculated record — mixing disco, black funk, reggae, what young Polynesians relate to, mixing it so the language too could come alive in a way the young could easily relate to.”

“. . . Maoridom has gone into all forms of contemporary art — carvings, paintings, music and the door shouldn’t be closed to the most truly expressive form of dance to come from the 80s. There’s a growing need for a contemporary Maori society — do the traditional-minded people want their beliefs to die when they die? Retreat is the answer of the weak and yes, we are strong and if that contemporary Maori society is allowed to flower . . . well those traditions will never die . . . they will stay alive and stay strong.”

“Anyway, the Poi E video was as calculated as the song, showing the poi coming out amongst the people, alongside the bop on the street . . . the poi alive in the 80s so the kids could see it. I get a real buzz when I hear kids singing Poi E.”

And the kids get a real buzz out of Dalvanius — out on the street they sort of blush when they see him and look out of the corner of their eyes . . . a Maori hero, putting together a Maori song in a way we forgotten kids can understand.

A Maori has reached out and made American black funk Maori and the same can happen with bop — imagine the dynamism of taiaha work combined with bop . . . the kids are ready for their culture, are aching in their hearts without it. Remember what all those forgotten kids were telling us.



There’s a huge creativity in the kids that bop has opened up — remember those kids at South Wellington Intermediate — here’s what they feel about bop at school.

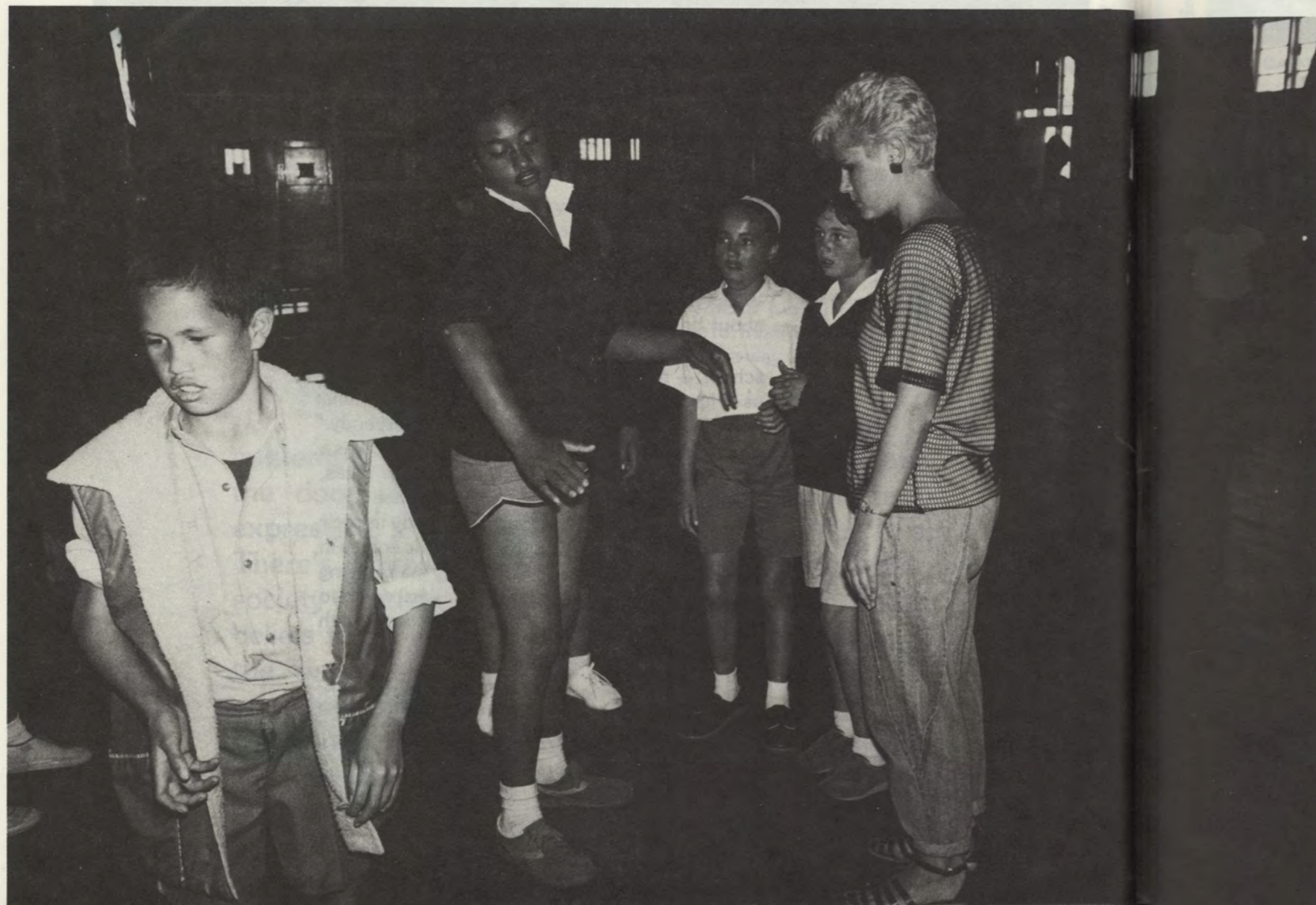
“The bop has made us feel better about school — nearly half the school come and watch us at lunchtime . . . we can prove ourselves, what we can do, we can prove ourselves to everybody.”

Talking in the hall there, all they needed was a tiny trigger to come up with all sorts of ideas, clever, sharp ideas . . . no stopping them . . . “We could act out this video, everybody in their class could be writing and this cool dude comes in with a tape-recorder and everybody starts doing the bop . . . yeah, and we can prove what we do to our teachers . . . and she’d join in the dance with us in the class.”

Their imagination is off and away . . . “We could do a concert at lunchtime . . . do Maori and Island dancing like in Poi E . . . it’d be massive — we could do the haka and turn it into the bop — do all the main dances at the end . . . yeah, we could all stand like statues and this magic guy could come along and touch us and we could start to dance . . . different dances.”

## ... TEACH THEM WHAT

GIVING LITTLE TIPS WITH THEIR BODIES HERE AND THERE . . . WAY TO GO MISS SAMPSON.



South Wellington Intermediate.

“We could try it out on the whole school and when we were really good we could go to other schools and then all the teachers in nearly all the schools might try doing it and we could challenge the schools . . . we want the teachers to give us a chance to teach them . . . teach them what kids like us can do . . . to prove we are not totally useless . . . yeah, not totally useless . . . everyone could learn from us.”

## KIDS LIKE US CAN DO

“We could call ourselves something . . . South Wellington Boppers . . . nah . . . Rock Steady School . . . the Bopsicles. We could get jobs as bop instructors — bring the bop to all the young people.”

In that hall the teacher Suzy Sampson was awkwardly learning the first step of bop — the body wave — all the kids were helping out . . . watching her closely and giving little tips with their bodies here and there . . . “way to go Miss Sampson . . . do yer stuff.”

Those kids are lucky — a couple of boys asked Suzy if they could use the hall at lunchtime — with the answer Suzy got being no, she set about arranging sessions of bop for the two hours of classtime in a week when kids could choose their own activities — from a choice of 15 options, more than half the kids chose bop. Polynesians and pakeha together, keen for the bop.

What’s happening with bop generally, is happening at that school — for once Polynesian kids are at the forefront, white kids who before had no reason to think Polynesian except in a negative way are looking up to Polynesian kids — absorbing a tiny bit of arohanui. Through bop, learning about the Polynesian way, respecting it, learning. It’s the first time that’s really happened and there’s a reason.





You see, I believe whites have no anchorstone in this country, don't even realise that New Zealand is in Polynesia — we came as arrogant outsiders and we have stayed arrogant outsiders — we have shut ourselves away from the enormous emotional and spiritual warmth of Polynesia.

You have to look up to a culture before you ever learn from it, you can never learn if you patronise and yes, bop in its way has got the pakeha children respecting and learning.

But not many schools are prepared to provide that learning . . . Suzy is an exception . . . virtually all the schools and teachers I approached couldn't understand what I was on about suggesting they include bop in class-time.

Some weren't even prepared to hear the idea out, others went as far as to say that bop kept the unruly element occupied at lunchtime but the answer to any formal recognition was no . . . we've got a school to run.

One teacher thought bop was . . . well, too sexual, for young kids. Another thought with all these kids up late at night bop wasn't something to be encouraged. A music teacher thought she could dangle bop before the kids like a carrot so they could learn real culture . . . her culture, a particular sort of classical music.

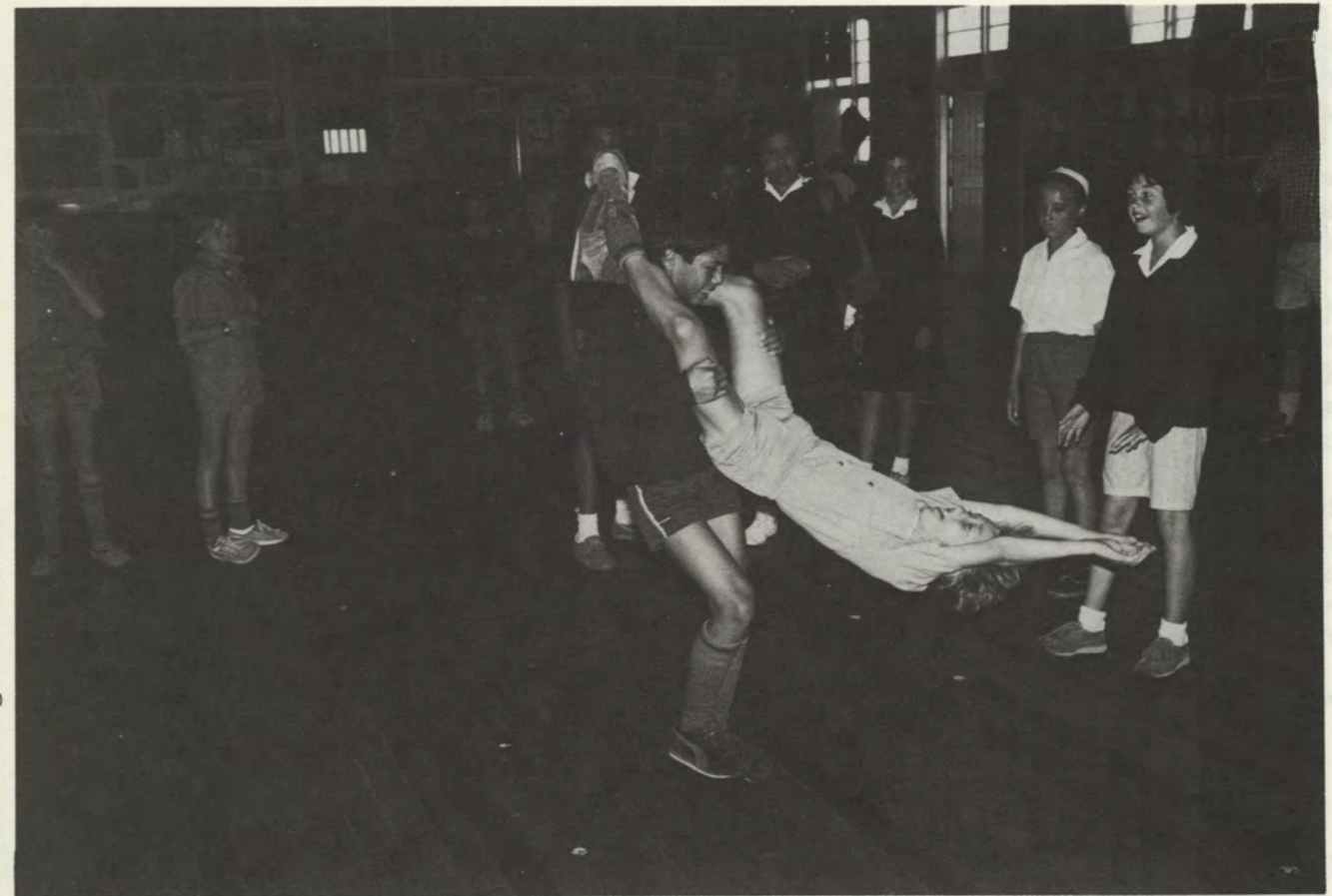
## POLYNESIAN

I say to those sorts of teachers, you have done enough alienating, shame on you . . . have you never known the pleasure in your heart of drowsing off in a group of mates in the late night, taking with you a feeling of togetherness as you sleep . . . in your book do children have to be packed off to bed with their Noddy books at seven?

And about this sexual business you find embarrassing — aren't your children allowed to move their hips, do they even know they've got hips.

Do you realise just how emotionally bleak your classroom is to the spirit of these kids . . . and how warm it could be for all if you opened up . . . please, breathe in some fresh air, knock down your defences and truly learn from these kids.

There's all sorts of ways bop can be embraced, not only in concerts and challenges — but in written work . . . you could get the kids to plan a bop night as a long-term class exercise — give the kids the job of working it out on paper, it would be a great project.



South Wellington Intermediate.

WE CAN PROVE OURSELVES. PROVE OURSELVES TO EVERYBODY.

## KIDS IN CONTROL

. . . PAKEHA KIDS LEARNING, RESPECTING.

They'd need maths to work out all the costs, percentages and how much food to order for how many, what to charge, how many acts you could fit in and so on.

They'd need language skills to work out routines, possible names for the night, maybe prepare the mihi, practise whai korero, wording of advertisements, could do an essay on how they would like people to enjoy themselves and so on.

Art classes could work on uniform designs, posters, hall decorations, could sculpt bop trophies . . . get the kids to use Polynesian design themes in their work.

The possibilities are endless . . . researching the beginning of bop in the district, research all the moves and give them new names . . . but most importantly you could get the kids to relate their dance to their parent's culture — maybe imagine how bop would have gone down in an early pa, or Island village. It's all learning skills and you won't begin to have to worry about motivation. Yes, you could even hold that bop night.

For those forgotten kids put your teaching in a bop context and you'll be away. Remember . . . bop has made us feel better about school . . . we want to teach them what kids like us can do, to prove we're not totally useless. Bop is their way . . . it's a gift . . . to you.

What is true for maraes, schools, is also true for the area of jobs — in early 1984 the labour department was refusing to recognise bop as a worthwhile employment programme to sponsor.

One example of how it could work came out at South Wellington Intermediate . . . here were these kids doing the bop in the hall by themselves and like young kids everywhere they needed to learn the dance properly and out in the streets I knew top class boppers were on the dole. The answer was simple — I put Suzy on to Joe from Twilite Thrillz, he's the bopper on Poi E and him and his mates really got into it — taking the kids for bop lessons.

At the time of writing it was working beautifully . . . Joe was getting a real buzz out of doing something for his little brothers and sisters and for the kids, they were locking on to some real sharp bop skills taught by someone they could recognise.

## YOU ARE YOUR OWN HEROES.

It was all about building true pride . . . you are your own heroes — and right in the middle of the process at long last, there was a school.

There's no reason why the labour department couldn't be there as well, Joe and others like him should be paid for their skills, for their work.

All kinds of arty projects get support from the department, one scheme involves teachers of modern ballet being paid to take their dance to schools — others involve all sorts of Kaleidoscope-style tomfoolery being pushed on to the kids by middle-class whites . . . on to kids whose minds are on bop, bop and more bop. The recognition the department gives Polynesia is by and large a slasher and a patch of gorse . . . Pakehas should chop their own gorse, we planted it. Things aren't quite that bad . . . there are some really good schemes going, but bop wasn't going to be one of them.

Tessa: "When the idea of a work skills programme came up it gave us all a real buzz — bop could just be a fad but if kids got jobs doing it, it could be so much more . . ."

"Modern ballet, jazz ballet have all been accepted for schemes — they think modern ballet is culture . . . but there's no reason a line should be drawn just because it is Polynesian — you know, modern ballet has no tradition in this country — but parts of bop come from a very long tradition."

"People don't realise bop is done for an audience, for entertainment, not like disco . . . with our scheme we could take our dance to schools so pakeha kids could see it, the teachers would see it . . . we could teach bop . . . we've already done a show for an old people's hospital and the old people loved it — we could do all these things."

"I mean, even a regular eight hour day is something few boppers would know about and they'd learn a lot . . . and we could develop all sorts of talents in other fields for future self-employment not just sitting around."

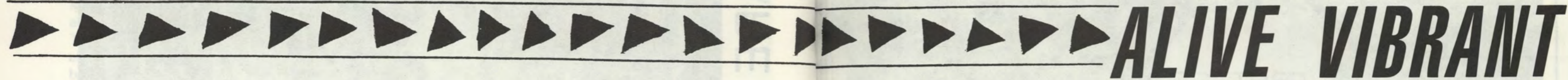
You have to consider what Tessa says against what work skills programmes often come down to . . . teaching kids to use the telephone, to open a bank account, basic things — it is not as if they are teaching kids to become brain surgeons — there is no promise of employment with regular schemes.

## YOU ARE YOUR OWN HEROES



■ Megazoids, Hamilton.

# TAHA POLYNESIA IN THE 80s

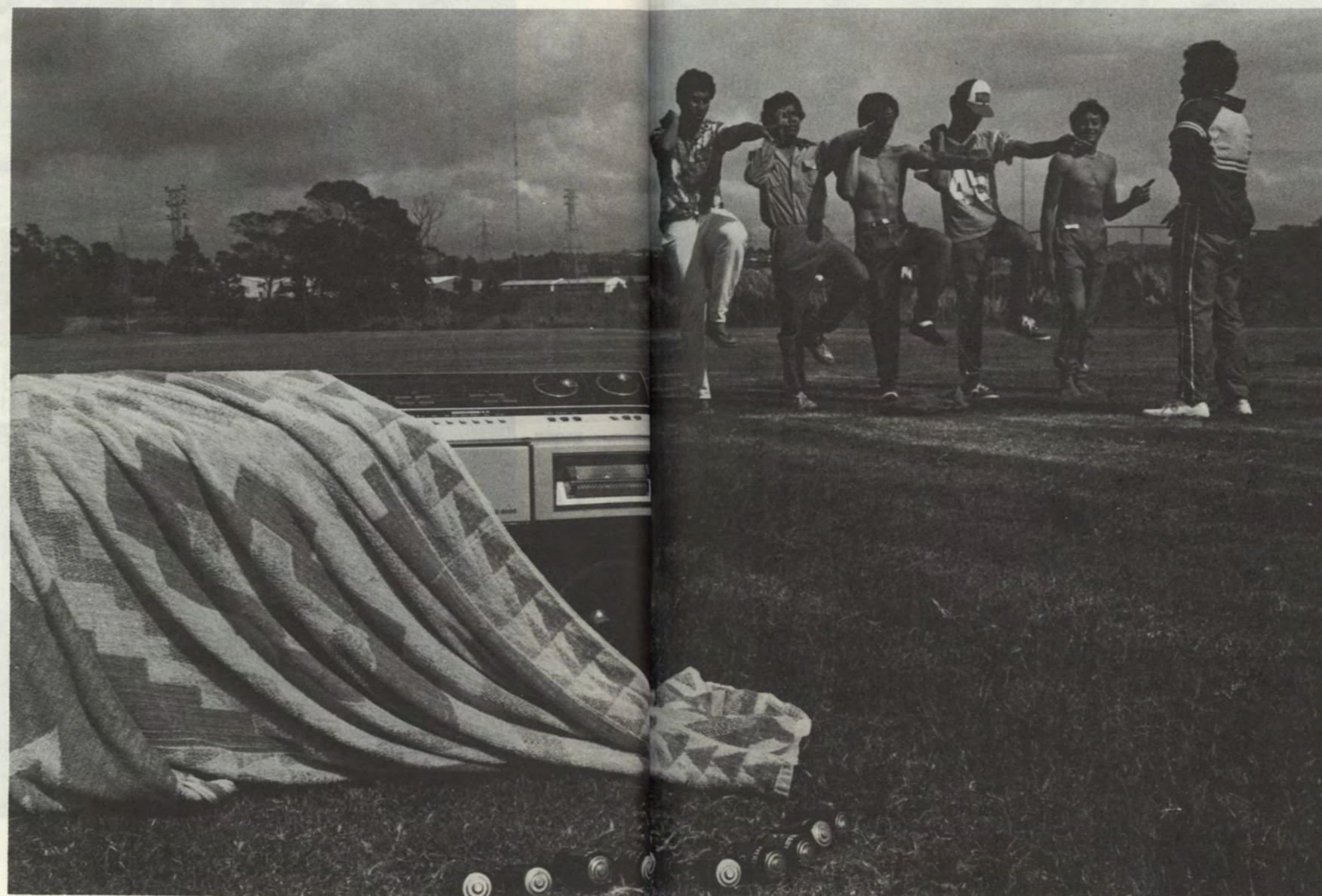


They could take that dance and all they learned out to schools, out to bop nights and those bop groups on a scheme could reach right inside those forgotten kids like no-one else — could become karere . . . messengers . . . for Polynesian tanga in the 80s.

## KARERE FOR

## OUR FUTURE

If the scheme was marae-based or Pacific Island church-based then the kids could be guided in taha Maori, in taha Polynesia — could develop new forms of dance using Polynesian culture — taiaha work, the sa sa — could come up with a whole vibrant new dance firmly rooted in real taha Polynesia.



■ Rutherford.

© 1984 by the author



THE LOVE THAT COMES FROM ALL POLYNESIA . . . IT'S HELD YOU TOGETHER.

I had a long, sometimes bitter journey writing this book . . . seeing on one hand the wairua of these kids and on the other hand the blindness of so many — they couldn't see what I was saying. Then I met Aufaga — I saw his son Petelo doing the bop with all sorts of Samoan dance moves mixed in . . . I had to meet his father . . .

Listen to Aufaga Petelo — he's a taxi driver and a catechist in the Samoan Catholic church in Wellington. He's traditionally-minded, even strict . . . but his words are music to the heart — there is no wall between him and his son. Petelo's group, Kinetic Energy practice at the church hall.

" . . . the hall is supposed to be charged out at \$200 every time you use it but I went to our parish priest because . . . I know . . . these children are our children. They're not walking the streets at night, they go to our hall and we feel secure . . ."

"What we have to do is try to teach them their culture, their language — how to live like Samoans and today that is very hard . . . we have to let them know we are Samoans and since bop came along I felt this was another way to give them the chance to learn . . . we had to link up with that bop."

## TOGETHER IN OUR MEANING OF THE WORD

"It is my duty to give my children what they need but how can they know if I don't tell them and how can we tell them if they aren't near us — it basically involves bringing the kids together with us . . . for Sunday School, for this break dance — it's the same."

"They need to know they're Samoans . . . palagis judge you separately, it's different with us . . . a Samoan needs to stand up in front of all his people and needs to know he is something through all his people."

"The most important thing in the Polynesian way is doing things together in our meaning of the word . . . when a relative died I didn't know I had so many friends . . . it's the kind of life I need to give to my children — community and unity. The palagis should learn from us, listen to us — in the palagi way you put your old in a rest home . . . to die."

"The bop dance brings our kids together in our meaning of the word and this is the kind of unity I'm talking about . . . we can link it up with other things we do. We are working with those of our children who cannot find jobs, working with them to form our own group inside the community to visit the elderly, to help others . . . we are lucky to have this bop to bring them together."



■ Petelo Petelo.

WITH BOP, WE CAN TAKE OUR PLACE.

Petelo has the last word . . . "We do untold bop for the church and it has made you feel accepted, it has made us curious about our own dance . . . since bop the matua say hello to us in the street and we know they are proud of us . . . they ask us to dance and normally the matua don't ask you to dance unless they think you are really good . . . when they say it we know they mean it and with bop we can take our place . . . it makes us feel proud, feel good to be Samoan."

# OUR FUTURE

Here's a surprise — just before I finished the bop part of this book I got this call from a bopper I know — Gary Davis and his friend Peter Roger, had been doing a bit of research into early Maori dance. Their interest was sparked by bop.

They found that before the pakeha came a lot of individual informal dancing was done in the whare-tapere, that a really sharp dancer was highly esteemed and that the form of so-called traditional dance we see today is only about 80 years old.

As Gary read that book in the library he felt a growing sense of . . . I know this, I feel this — when him and Peter came across one dance, the Poteteke Haka, Gary knew why he had the feeling. That haka told Gary that him and his dance really do belong. We Maoris discovered bop — it is truly ours. Gary drew a couple of pictures to show how he felt, one of them is reproduced on the next page. Gary's discovery is part of a fresh, beautiful beginning. Gary has found his place, can only go forward.

And Gary, his words soft and slow, his eyes somewhere else says . . . "to know my tipuna were doing this dance, it makes me very happy."

# OUR PAST

# WRAPUP . . .

## THOSE KIDS ARE STUNNING THEY ARE OUR KIDS.

Writing this book I came across exactly the same difficulties which confront our kids . . . that is no belief. All the publishers contacted thought the message was too strong or there was no belief that the kids would buy the thing — or put simply . . . blacks don't read. No belief.

Without support it has meant that the book has taken about a year to get out and a few things have happened since which need mentioning.

More or less the kids and their dance have been left high and dry and the contrast between the amazing growth of bop and its stagnation has left many kids bitter.

While bop still occupies an important part in the lives of the kids its disappearance as an upfront high-energy thing has got many of the kids reaching for that glue bag.

They are saying look we did our bit, but out there . . . no reaction, no helping hand to lead our growth on to things new. Glue.

Now the big thing is bombing — spray painting art on walls. Again that came from a single television programme and again it's had enormous impact. Again the powers-that-be are trying to stifle its energy.

The message of this book holds true for bombing just as it applies to bopping — just substitute the word bombing for bopping and instead of clamping down provide paints and walls, essays on bombing and so on — see Chapter 4.

The creative power that bombing has tapped should be helped toward a specifically Polynesian identity and can be used to provide a lead for our culture. That power should be encouraged not repressed.

This book has been deliberately provocative because although individual schools and labour department schemes in restricted numbers are working with the kids constructively and beautifully the fact is that they are a drop in the bucket. Certainly none of the hundreds of kids I spoke to had anything positive to say about their schools, their prospects. That is the reality I presented.

Television and schooling remain the big enemy — both areas are moving at a snail's pace or not at all to embrace the multi-cultural nature of this society. Lip service is the word to describe the process. A young kid still has no positive Polynesian role-model to focus on, in for example television ads unless a smiling ditch-digger is a role model. The education department still has the mentality that it has to be forced to make concessions in teaching Polynesian tanga. Concessions to what these proud beautiful islands are all about.

It's apparently more satisfying to whinge about street-kids and to demand more police and less vandalism than it is to respond creatively and supportively. In Auckland there has been an enormous whinging about boppers and street kids in Aotea Square but the Aotea cultural centre planned for the square has about as much to offer to the kids as a concrete block. Which is exactly what it looks like. Vandal-proof, no doubt.

There is not the faintest hint of Polynesia in its design, and where is there a meeting place for our young or do they still have to hang about in the shadows with their glue. Maybe a meeting place at ground level with all sorts of casual opportunities for the kids to express their talent — the murals, the music, the good healthy food. A meeting place where the rest of us can have the opportunity to share the originality and power of these kids.

Their originality and power is our future and there is one labour department scheme in Auckland which shows the way — in unlocking potential through drama, art, waiata, dance. In less than three months street-kids who had been told by everyone they had nothing to offer are flowering with all sorts of unique, powerful talent . . . writing their own waiata, producing superb art and everything is linked to the tanga of this land.

The scheme had to be fought for and it's still a fight to keep it going but what's happening points the way — takes over where this book left off. Those kids are stunning. They are our kids.

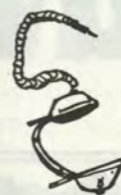
Arohanui

by the way half close your eyes and catch the pattern Gary's dancers make.



### PŌTĒTEKE HAKA

It was a kind of Haka dance called the pōtēteke in which the dancers turn upside down so that the head is below and the legs in the air.



The dance was performed to prepare the union of earth and Kumara. It was highly erotic and a joyous occasion.

EVERYONE SANG



Xerox copies of earlier articles I have written are available from Arohanui Publications at \$1 each or \$7 for the set. Send a cheque or postal order and please specify which titles you want . . . to 6 John Street, Ponsonby, Auckland.

Disco Kids/Break-dance/Waitangi Treaty Truth/1984 Youth Riot/McDonald's Culture/Polynesian Kids in Schools/Samoan "overstayer"/Marae Weekend/Kohanga Reo.

# SOME CHOICE WORDS

## ... YOU GOT TO KNOW THEM

Maybe you didn't know the meaning of some of the Maori words in this book and they're the most important, they're the true words of this land. You won't get anything like their true meaning out of a dictionary. I didn't want to have a glossary of English meanings for Maori words like you get all the time. I wanted Maori meanings for Maori words. Anything else is an insult.

The meanings were given by someone, who while knowledgeable, didn't wish to claim credit for meanings he felt he was just passing on. I am presenting what he told me. There is nothing alphabetical about it.

"**Tupuna** are our forebears, ancestors and they are alive today through the mana they leave . . . what you leave behind must not hurt anybody. **Tupuna** are alive through the mountains, the land. The most stable of **tupuna** is the mountain."

"**Turangawaewae** is like a place where people have the authority to stand and talk . . . it's because of tupuna and their position in an area, that's through birth. It is possible to earn the right through the mana you earn in an area."

"To me, **wairua** is the sum total of knowledge and spirit passed to you from your tupuna — you can use it wisely, ignore it, but you have to respect it . . . from somebody I have grown — whatever powers my tupuna had, likewise are in me. It is a force that has come about through the knowledgeable people. It's not a lock-up knowledge in a book — it's your belief, your faith."

"My grandfather used to go into the bush to tend small trees, saplings, he used to mould them into walking stick shapes and he would always do a small song. I know now he was giving **karakia**. It's asking the gods to clear the way, it's a way of tapping into the wairua, into the knowledge and power of your tupuna."

"**Mana** is a power, a respect people have for a person. Your **mana** comes from what you have done on behalf of your people."

"Being **whakamaa** is like being shy, it's also a kind of modesty. One instance . . . it is the humbleness one feels out of respect for someone with great mana. Another is a shyness which comes from being in a lesser position to a stranger. Sometimes **whakamaa** is seen to be insolence by the pakeha because they don't get an answer . . . but to say anything would be seen as an affront from our side."

"A **taiaha** is a long club and it has its own identity — there are several types of long club. The tongue must never touch the gound."

"**Waiata** is a song — it's very important, a way of getting a message across, to unite, to teach."

"**Whare-nui** have many different names . . . it's the meeting house, with carved pou pou down either wall which represent different tupuna. It's the large house of the complex, can be called **whare-tupuna**, **whare-hui** a gathering place for hui."

"People were sent from pa to pa, sent with messages . . . this person is a **karere**, a messenger, they often had important messages."

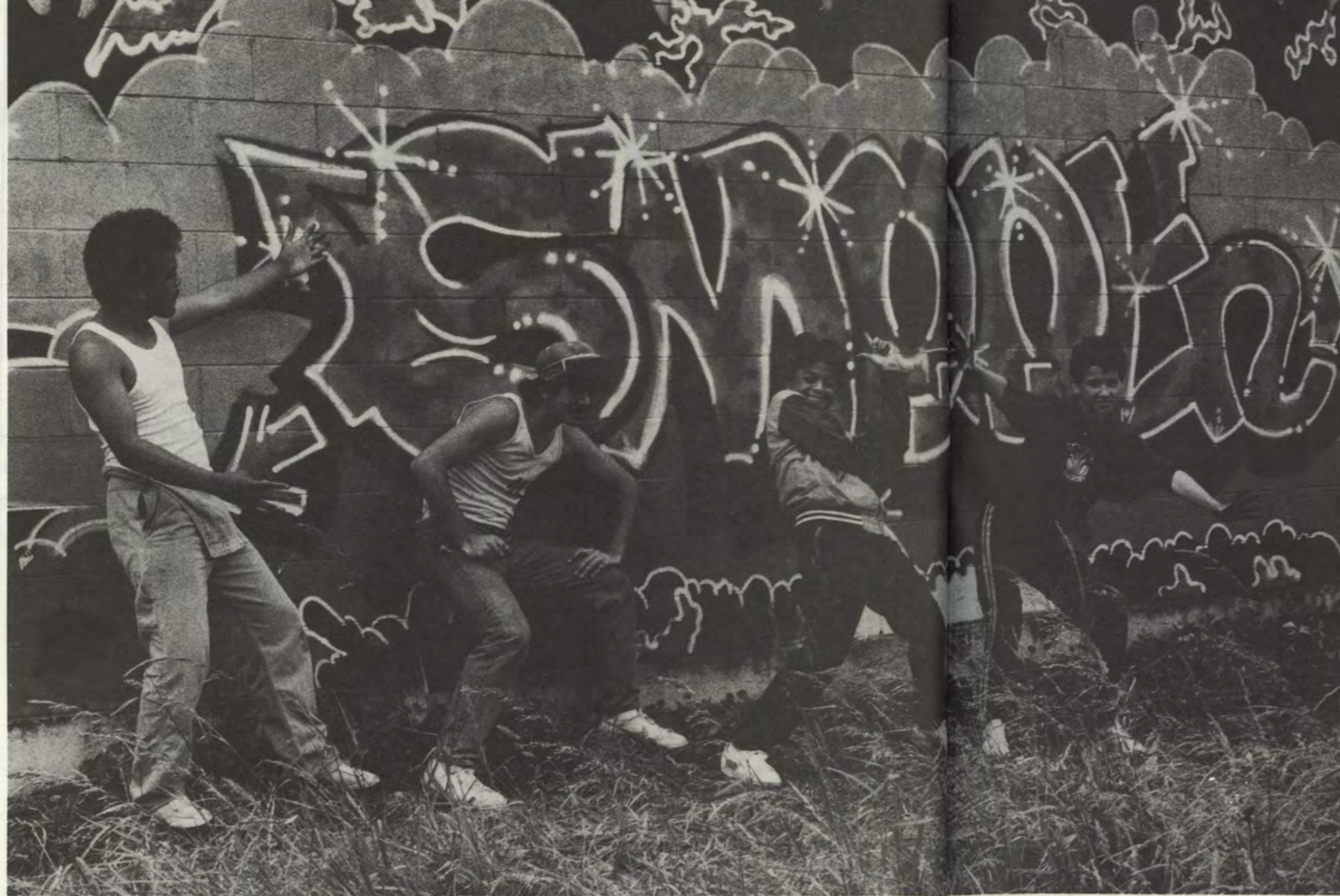
"**Koha** is an appreciation, you should always take a gift . . . in the old days people from the coast might take fish if they visited further inland . . . they'd go back with plenty of kumara or something else . . . giving **koha** is a way of respecting."

"When people come to a pa, first there is a **karanga** to make the visitors compatible with what's at the pa . . . it's done by women and if you listen to the later speeches they are based on the **karanga**, the **karanga** is to ease the people's stay . . . you tell the people who you are, you say why am I speaking, pay respect to the dead, tell of the mountain's background . . . to ease their stay."

"Following the **karanga** is the **powhiri**, as the **karanga** tails off the **powhiri** begins or the **karanga** can still go on . . . it's a dance pulling in the visitors in their waka, their canoe . . . when the **powhiri** stops everyone is silent, and stand to show their respect."

"When people are seated **mihī** begins and all get up and talk . . . speeches of welcome. After the **mihī**, then the hongī and the formal part of the welcome is over."

(Tupuna can be said or spelt as tipuna as well)



And yeah, you've got this dream in your head and got these bits of paper around your room and there's a spray can under your bed you've smuggled in and the pressure is too much. You got to bomb.

You're not alone . . . hundreds of kids all round the country have got the same sort of ideas burning a hole in their heads . . . but HOLD IT — this bombing thing is real big and you don't want to spoil it, you want to do it right. There's bombing crews around who are heading in the right direction and here's one of them. This is how they lay down their action.

Smooth Inc. have got this piece out at Morningside train station and they're getting out there to clean it up, finish it off, fresh it up. They started it by torchlight and now they're finishing off in broad daylight.

And Claude's room is full of felts, marker pens, he's got an art board set at an angle with a whole lot of art tools and Smooth Inc. come around anytime they can to create new pieces, bounce ideas off each other. Get down to it. Master those art tools.

The room drips with the smell of ink and spray paint and the guys are getting into their gear to go bombing — stuffing their bag full of cans, cleaning out the caps, checking the design one more time. The rattle of those little balls inside the cans sounds like a drum-beat . . . tok tok tok tok tok tok.

# BOMBING ■ BOMBING ■ BOMBING ■ BOMBING ■ BOMBING

You've got this idea in your brain, burning in your brain . . . it's been glowing red hot right inside your skull for longer than you can remember. Everything's planned out right to the last detail, inside your brain.

And all around your room there's little scraps of paper and each little bit's got your name on it — well, got your names on it scratched out in ballpoint, pencil, crayons, felts . . . you can't quite work out what name to have — Kid Nasty, Spacer, Synch but what's important is the way you get that street name looking and there on your paper and in your brain there's a whole heap of colours, shapes, sizes, letterings, clouds, sparklings, cut-ins . . . there's choices, alternatives — too many of them.

But in amongst those bits of paper and in amongst those thoughts one idea starts to push ahead of the rest and everytime you've got a spare second to think the sort of thoughts you want to think, there it is . . . this choice piece — gleaming bold sprayed in ten colours all across the town hall and everyone finds out who Kid Nasty is and soon they're begging to have their walls graced with your art. Passing bucks your way. Fame. Recognition.

Everyone's biting your ideas, stealing your ideas all round the city, but you don't mind because everytime they run up a piece you can see that it's you behind it and anyway you're on to other stuff, new stuff. Bomber King, just doing your thing.

## THIS IDEA BURNING IN YOUR BRAIN

To get to the piece you have to walk through a wood-yard under the noses of the neighbours who peer out their windows at these crazy kids fronting up to this dust-covered station halfway through a Sunday afternoon.

Dust-covered . . . everything at the station is covered in dust . . . this deep brown dust that train stations everywhere get covered in. So there's dust, train tracks, a subway and a gallery of grey-brown concrete walls in the middle of an ocean of weeds — fennel, bracken, dock, with rubbish lying all over.

It's straight in through the fennel and up to the wall and the guys have a last minute korero, a last minute talk to see who does what, and when, and how.





# HI-ENERGY SPRAY-CAN

Fissss Fissss . . . Claude, Lua, Dave and Jason are swarming over the wall like giant crazy ants with their cans going Fissss. They start off slow, moving into the rhythm of the spray until that jet of paint seems to come right out of their fingertips.

It's like a magic wand, or a Jedi magic spell or power . . . this stream of colour jetting out of your fingertips except that it doesn't come from your finger tips . . . first the colour has to mix around inside your head and then travel down past your neck and through your veins . . . you feel it coming out of you, like you and the colour were the same thing.

But the idea doesn't come from just from your own brain because your brothers and you have worked on this together and it's something that comes from all of you together. Together you've sat down for hours thrashing out this piece and here you are. Doing it. Coming from all of you.

# DANCE COLOUR FLIES FROM YOUR FINGERS

Watching Smooth Inc. at work is like watching those ballet dancers who jump about the place with long ribbons — those long ribbons that make patterns in the air. The guys' whole bodies are behind that stream of paint and they twirl like ballet dancers and make their patterns on concrete — lay down their images and their paint on dust-covered concrete for all to see. Forever.

Forget the ribbons, it's more like watching a piece of good bop or body-popping because those hand movements have the same ease, the same precision . . . these guys dancing with their art — locking on to something that leaves like a body print on dust-covered concrete.

To get a piece that looks fast and sure, a piece with energy you got to squeeze that colour out fast and sure — got to time your body to the razor-edge point where the colour fills out a second before everything starts to drip.

So you dance on that razor-edge — a double bladed, super stay sharp, platinum plus razor edge because you have to stay accurate as well as fast — got to get the paint in and out again like a surgeon. Too much spray fuzz off your line and the piece loses its clarity, so you're talking millimetres in this spray-can dance.

It's video game precision you're talking — except your finger is on the button of a spray-can not the kill button of some machine. The way you move quick and certain, the way your eyes, your brain and your body all line up . . . it's the same way . . . Fiss Fiss instead of Boom Boom.

## ***THIS WALL . . . IT'S YOURS***

Teachers call that sort of thing motor skills development, but you don't care what they call it. One thing you know is that you got it. Powering those colours along the wall — one concentrated pure stream of video sudden death staring you in the face and at the end you've got something real. Standing up straight and tall, just like you are.

Doing a piece sucks the energy faster than the paint sprays out of the can. For one thing if the piece is any good you will have been planning it for days and so you're all hyped up before you even get there and a second thing . . . there's so much to keep track of while you're doing it.

Drip, fuzz out, the right colours and getting the proportions right . . . this piece has got your name on it and you're exploding an idea that's been on a little scrap of paper . . . exploding it on

a wall that measures six metres long. All the time you're checking this idea, which worked on paper, checking to see that you'll be proud to have your name on this wall. While all this is going on you're doing your hi-energy dance keeping up with the colour that flies from your fingers.

Seeing it there on the wall is a whole different thing to seeing it in your head . . . but just like in your head this thing on the wall is changing, growing, challenging you and your inspiration, your skill . . . it's just like when you've lain awake thinking blue clouds with silver frostings and a grid of yellow electric storm lightening coming through from the black with white highlights twinkling here and there. These decisions are your decisions and you have to make them now.



You stand back again and again . . . Claude wants red bubbles in the black but to you that weakens the piece — doesn't add enough. So in amongst the fennel next to the rail track you're talking bubbles. Next minute you're talking highlights because somehow it doesn't look right anymore.

Two hours of this and your dust-covered wall next to the fennel has turned into a jewel . . . gleaming sparkling emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, rubies written across this dumb old wall and there up on the wall it's you and the crew.

That's your statement, a different kind of statement comes from the people who run our schools. They spend thousands of dollars painting out your stuff and they complain that all this vandalism comes from a television programme which should never have been allowed. Those people up there are completely out of touch . . . the school boards complained to television and television claimed that it can't be proved that there's any sort of link between what shows on television and why happens on the streets.

Those sort of people should quit trading their half-baked tired old excuses and get down with the kids to work for a new way, a better way. They're not fooling anybody but themselves.

A couple of little things . . . art and music which are real Polynesian strengths take second place in our schools. Instead of having to take five academic subjects for School C there should be five different subjects in art . . . to let our kids develop their skills in a way that's a hundred times more important than learning Latin.

School Cert should be junked . . . put in a museum alongside sending children down mines back in England . . . or hanging children for stealing a loaf of bread. Pakehatanga.

And while I'm at this rave, all these people running round blaming anything they can for the 1984 Youth Riots, had better look in their own backyard. Any society which tells half its kids that they are failures at age 15 can't claim surprise when our kids believe that message. That sort of society had better bring out the water cannon, or go back to the hangman's rope.

And I'm sick of everyone blaming the parents . . . Polynesian parents I know are unbelievably strict with their kids, but they still can't deal with

the pressure of failure that our schools ram into their kids. Our kids.

And the police had better get their act together too, more long batons solve nothing. This might sound crazy but toward the middle of 1984 the police were forcing the breakers off the streets, telling them they couldn't dance in the streets. Our kids not allowed to dance in our streets. Crazy. Dave, from the Megazoids puts the tailing off of break down to that pig-headed attitude.



#### BOMBING — DIRECT TVTANGA IMPORT HOT OFF THE CELLULOID.

Bombing . . . spray-can art, graffiti art, street art, writing . . . is like one of the foundations of the hip hop culture right in there with breaking and rapping.

Rapping is like a form of karakia it's said fast, with all sorts of different rhythms running through it, woven in like a flax kete. Rapping tells a story a kid on the street can recognise and it builds the spirit. Rapping has got some powerful word images running through it but the kids here can't do it too well yet because they don't have the sound gear. Get a Polynesian rap going and there will be no stopping our kids.

Back to bombing, just like bop it's a direct tvtanga import hot off the celluloid or whatever they make television film from and it's grabbed hold. Grabbed tight. Same story . . . if a kid like

me can do it, then I can do it too . . . there's not too much of that message on our television.

Bombing . . . buried away in New York this guy Taki started to stick his name all over town. Taki 183. He lived in 183rd and he developed his art from just the bare name to something that had impact. This was in the early seventies.

And toward the end of 1984 here in Aotearoa a documentary called Style Wars blasted out of the box. It looked at all these choice pieces sprayed on New York subway trains. To all the kids who were hooked on break, those images on tv were like some powerful unheard command from a far-away God. All over the country there was a rush for the video to get all this colour down on tape.



YOU GOT TO RESEARCH SO MUCH.

Now, the Style Wars tape is like a Bible to all these kids who've got these burning ideas in their heads . . .

Claude Iusitini and his little brother Lua were inspired and together with the Megazoids they formed up Smooth Inc. . . . a bombing crew with one aim . . . to do the brightest, boldest, most dynamic bombing in Aotearoa. Every other bomber had the same idea, of course. Heading out to spend \$50 from their own pockets to liven up our streets.

Smooth had one advantage and that is Claude who is a skilled graphic artist just starting out on a career. Together they powered into their art the same way they got into their dance.

They spend every spare second getting ideas down on paper but there's one big difference compared to paperwork for school and that is at the end of all this work there's action and that feeling of action powers every penstroke, every little fragment of an idea. This is for real, this is for me.

Claude tells how things are going down in Auckland:

"There's no good bombers in Auckland yet, there are heaps of bombers but what they lack is technique . . . they get one can and think yeah I

am a bomber and go rushing out with one can, with one colour."

"What we have done is that we are all individual bombers but we joined up . . . if you want to produce a real good piece you've got to get together to pool your cans and pool your ideas."

"The problem is that too many bombers grab the ideas for the pieces straight out of their brains and go ahead without any planning and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. With the monster sale one we spent days planning it and used 20 cans . . . you've got to research so much, the colour combinations . . . what works well with what and you've got to know your styles. The wild where you can hardly pick what it's saying, to semi-wild where you can read it but it's still got arrows, and just the straight piece."

"You've got to master the 3 D and the clouds to bring out your piece and all the time you keep your eyes open — cityscapes, magazines — keep your eye out for colours you like. You've got to master things before you try it out in public so you're in control of the spray, not the spray in control of you."

“If you don’t take it real serious like a professional, then you’re just a toy and you might as well give up because there’s too many out there making the city look stupid, giving bombers a bad name.”

“All bombers never prepare their piece, they always go straight in with the black, they should start with white so you can cover up any mistakes . . . there could be a lot of good bombers around but they got to get with it.”

“We reckon we’re good but we’re not that

good, we wouldn’t even be ranked in New York. We’ve got to refine our techniques and style and that takes dedication . . . we design a piece again and again, try it on a practise wall under the house and we come together and we all criticise it and come up with something to be proud of. You have to set your sights high.”



### BE TOUGH ON YOURSELF . . . DO IT RIGHT



With bombing you have to be tough with yourself, no-one else is going to and who wants to look like an egg with your name up and everybody laughing at it.”



IT'S ART IF IT'S DONE RIGHT. PURE ART.

“That is part of the reason we came together . . . we got sick of all this trash and if we do something that’s choice then that will travel around and other bombers won’t be satisfied.”

“When we do something we finish it, we stand by it . . . nothing gets on a wall that we’re not proud of, nothing gets on a wall that won’t inspire the people around who see it.”

“It takes time, you’ve got to fit your piece to the wall, design it so it works with the wall . . . you don’t want some scratchy little piece stuck away in the corner or something that’s out of shape. Yeah,

and felts are the best thing to do your roughs, do your visuals, it’s the closest thing there is to spray that you can put on paper . . . red and yellow are great colours but there’s no limit to the colours you can choose except that they have to work.”

“And just your name is wasting your time . . . with clouds, highlights, backgrounds from what means something to you, that is art. What I can’t get is how people react to spray cans . . . it’s just another instrument for an artist and I tellya man, it’s art if it’s done right. Pure art.”

“It’s going to be choice when there are ten crews around who really do good stuff . . . it’ll be like the whole city will be an art gallery. Art from the people straight on the walls where the people can see it.”

idea of Aotearoa in them. Don't forget to put your name and address so we can send you a free copy if we publish your work and write a new book telling us about what you're up to.

You look out there who've got some choice bombing pieces . . . send back and write outlines to Arabian Publications and we'll try to put them in our next book. Make them clean and put your



**SMOOTH HAS GONE PUBLIC TO FIND WALLS.**

And that's the whole point about how Smooth are doing their thing . . . they've gone through the practise stage where they put up squiggly nothing stuff that no-one looks at twice, they put stuff right in the public eye and spend some time on it, getting it right . . . there's only one way you can do work of that standard.

Claude: "We look for a wall on an old building, or a wall that serves no purpose and go ahead and ask the person who owns it if he would like it brightened up . . . and then you've got to be good, got to have exciting top class visuals to show that person, so he's convinced you'll do the job."

**Bombing book.**

You kids out there who've got some choice bombing pieces . . . send black and white outlines to Arohanui Publications and we'll try to put them in our next book. Make them clean and put your

idea of Aotearoa in them. Don't forget to put your name and address so we can send you a free copy if we publish your work and write a note too, telling us about what you're up to.



Smooth arranged through Simon van der Laan, to do a wall in the middle of Queen St for someone who was holding a sale . . . the whole thing made the newspaper. Smooth got free cans and the work is piling in.

"More people looked at that wall than any other bit of advertising. Bombing is a real effective form of communication and it's more efficient than

ordinary sign writing . . . bang, it's up the next day."

The thing to do is choose the right sort of business, a record shop, a radio station, a clothes store . . . there's not much point going to your local butcher. If the people don't want their walls done you could do a window but you'd have to paint it first so the paint can key into a surface, and won't run.

"Smooth has gone public to find walls . . . we thought why should we hide in the night to do something that's beautiful. We aren't doing graffiti, we are doing art, doing something that someone will see is fresh, see a wall all brightened up. Go up to people, they're not going to shoot you, just ask . . . show photos of some work you've done or get to work on some really stunning visuals and put them in a slick folder, keep the paper clean and keep your artwork meticulous."

"What you have to tell them is no-one, but no-one will stick graffiti on a real choice piece . . . bombing will stop graffiti overnight . . . no-one is going to stick up a slack piece next to something real good."

"There's so much we can do, because we've all got the talent . . . us Polynesians are in control of this bombing thing. Our next thing we want to do is an island scene, palm trees, fales. Spray up paradise on a wall. Spray up where we are from."

"Our initial ideas might come from New York but we have to fuse our own identity in as well . . . eventually our bombing in Aotearoa will become our own style, not an imitation."

## ***SPRAYUP PARADISE ON A WALL . . . AOTEAROA***

"Like if you have all these bombing pieces with Polynesian influence it's bound to stir up the curiosity within each kid."

"They can say, shucks, them's my roots up there . . . all the kids who don't know about their culture in the broad spectrum of things, it would help in a really big way to bring all of us together."

"With all these bombing pieces all over the city, we will have the best multi-racial harmony in the world. The envy of New York . . . every bomber over there will look up to us . . . they don't have the same strength of culture."

"You see, they were brought from Africa and they lost all their roots but we haven't lost ours, not yet. Nobody should want to lose their roots."

"Every group here has its own culture, its own art and we can bring it together for everyone with our art . . . take the designs you get in a tapa . . . or like Maori has a flowing style, Rarotongan has a natural style with flowers, hibiscus — you could use hibiscus instead of clouds and the Samoans have a formal style, straight organised style . . . all

these styles we could use. Do Koru instead of arrows."

"Something like the Race Relations Office or a council should commission good bombers to show the way, to build up our sense of roots."

"People everywhere should loosen up, give youth their chance. We've got heaps to offer."

"We want to put our idea of paradise on the walls, Aotearoa, where we all come from."



Aotearoa bombing piece by Smooth . . . Claude used pe'a influences for part of the background design. (pe'a is the Samoan art of tattoo)





### The ZM Street Action, Street Art, Bombing Challenge

All you young people out there with RED HOT BOMBING ideas burning in your brains . . . Here's a chance to get those ideas out of your head and onto a wall.

**ZM** has got some choice walls around the city and we're looking for bombing talent that we can be proud of. What we need from you is top class visuals. If you're a winner you get the wall, all the spray cans you need and help from one of Auckland's top bombing crews . . . "Smooth Inc."

A couple of things . . . when you're creating your visuals try and think of a message, something like 'Save the Whales', 'Don't Drink and Drive' or a message to promote racial harmony. All designs must incorporate the **1ZM** logo.

Make sure your visuals are clean and sharp. Make sure they are attached to the entry form and posted to —

**1ZM**  
**PO Box 33-1251**  
**TAKAPUNA**

By the way, check out 'Street Action Aotearoa' for tips on how to bomb properly, and maybe for some inspiration. Spend time on it, do it right.

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

AGE: ..... TELEPHONE No: .....