

Taken from Nickomo's Songbook "Heart To Heart" with special permission for Sing For Water Cardiff

HE ATUA HE TANGATA

(Nickomo)

Handwritten notes: % Dm, G

He A-tu-a He Tang-a-ta

He A-tu-a He Tang-a-ta

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Handwritten musical score for the song "A-tu-a-ta". The score is written on four staves. The top three staves are for vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) and the bottom staff is for the Bass. The lyrics are "He A-tu-a He Tang-a-ta". The score includes a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The melody is simple and repetitive, with the vocal parts harmonizing the lyrics. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment.

He A-tu-a He Tang-a-ta

1. 2.

He A-tu-a Ta-ma-te Ra Ta-ma-te Ra

Ta-ma-te Ra Ta-ma-te Ra

Ta-ma-te Ra Ta-ma-te Ra

Ta-ma-te Ra Ta-ma-te Ra

child of the sun

fine

Ta- ma- te Ra Ta- ma- te Ra

Ta- ma- te Ra Ta- ma- te Ra

Ta- ma- te Ra Ta- ma- te Ra

Ta- ma- te Ra Ta- ma- te Ra

DS

Ta- ma- te Ra Ta- ma- te Ra He A- tu- a

He Atua, He Tangata, He Atua, He Tangata

Tamate Ra, Tamate Ra, Tamate Ra

He Atua, He Tangata (Maori proverb)– I am / behold a god, I am /behold a human
Tamate Ra – child of the Sun

Source: Rangi Mari Rose Perry

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HE ATUA, HE TANGATA

I came across this Maori proverb thanks to our good friend Shafia who has lived in Christchurch in South Island for many years after moving from Wales. She is now one of the main teachers of Dances of Universal Peace in New Zealand and has introduced several dances into the repertoire from the Maori culture; her part-Maori ancestry has been helpful in allowing her access to information and practices concerned with Maori spirituality. On her last visit to the UK, she shared a dance using these Maori phrases at our Summer Solstice celebration, which was very well received.

The dance on which this chant is based, also used the phrase '**Tama Nui te Ra**' which refers to the belief in a Universal or '*Great Central Sun*' which is the source and sustenance of all life in the universe. It is about the interconnectedness of things and how whatever is special and sacred in the universe is also within us and manifested by us.

The Music

The music is easy to learn as the upper three parts are more or less in parallel moving in block chords. The bass part has a different rhythm in the first section of the song and works as a lead part which you can either teach first or last.

The parts come together in the second section, but the basses need to be ready not to dwell on the final chord but lead off into the next repetition of the chant. It's good to double up '**Tamate Ra**'s at the end to allow the final chord to ring without interruption.

A strong full-voice is appropriate throughout, with the occasional quieter one for contrast.

Movement

At the very least a *wiri-wiri* should be attempted (trembling hands) to demonstrate that the life force is flowing strongly in us, also widening the eyes as much as possible, though this can get tiring! The Maori do not hold with standing still while singing!

There are also some actions we use which are lifted from Shafia's dance:

1. He Atua 2. He Tangata 3. He Atua he Tangata
4. Tamate Ra, Tamate Ra, Tamate Ra

upper parts

1. Cross your (trembling) fists in front of your chest then spread your arms out and up, (trembling) palms outstretched facing forward.
2. Repeat the action but this time the arms come out and down.
3. Repeat 1&2
4. With (trembling) palms now facing up, they are raised with each **Tamate Ra** (also getting louder) until arms stretched up and palms outward on the third one.

basses

The basses perform 1-3 out of phase in order to be synchronized with everyone else, so the fists are crossed on the 'a' of '*Atua*' instead of on the '*He*'.

Note – all actions to be performed decisively and strongly following the beat.