

DANCING WITH LIONS: (PER)FORMING CHINESE CULTURAL IDENTITY AT A NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOL

HENRY JOHNSON¹
University of Otago

This paper shows how a notion of Chinese cultural identity is formed as a direct result of amateur performance activities among a group of students at an Auckland secondary school.² The specific type of performance under study is the Chinese lion dance, which is performed at celebratory events throughout the year, and the school is Macleans College in the ward of Howick in Auckland, New Zealand. The students who perform the lion dance identify themselves as Chinese, although each varies in how they place themselves in this sometimes essentialist grouping in terms of their place of birth, length of residence in New Zealand, and knowledge of Chinese culture. Their performances of the lion dance are displays of cultural difference in contexts of celebration.³ The students' experiences as amateur performers of

¹ Henry Johnson (henry.johnson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz) is Associate Professor in the Department of Music, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. His research focuses on Asian music and performing arts with particular reference to the place of traditional music in contemporary society. This paper would not have been written without the help of several people. Guil Figgins contributed to the data gathering part of the project as Assistant Research Fellow at the University of Otago in 2003; and the staff and students of Macleans College, Auckland, have been pivotal in sharing information and personal experiences, in particular the members of the Intercultural Club, especially the Lion Dance Group, Ann Richardson, Sheryl Figgins, and the principal, Byron Bentley. The research was undertaken on various occasions in 2003 with the approval of Macleans College, and interviews were carried out with University of Otago Ethics Committee approval. I am especially grateful to the University of Otago for funding this research.

² Unless stated otherwise, I use the term Chinese broadly in the discussion, where it defines Chinese from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and from the Chinese diaspora.

³ Compare Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1992): 6-23; and Stuart Hall, "The Question of Cultural Identity," in *Modernity and its Futures*, ed. Stuart Hall, David Held and Tony McGrew (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with The Open University, 1992): 273-316. In the New Zealand context see Kwi Leng Lee, "A Study of "Chinese

Chinese traditional culture in New Zealand are highlighted with the aim of understanding through ethnographic study how, where and why they perform, and what this tells us about the distinctiveness of migration to New Zealand.⁴

In the present political milieu, the paper stresses the importance of New Zealand's engagement with Asia in terms of the nation's Asian communities (established, recent and new), a concern that led to the government-sponsored *Seriously Asia Forum* regarding the need for linking cultures and communities together.⁵ In connection with education and towards New Zealand's Asian communities, Rebecca Foley of the Asia New Zealand Foundation (formerly Asia 2000 Foundation of New Zealand) points out some of the government's strategies:

Overall there have been positive steps through government policy and strategy towards strengthening New Zealand's Asian communities but more remains to be done. Responsive policies and strategies in the migrant settlement, education, media and health areas, along with greater opportunities to learn intercultural skills are vital to promote the development of strong and healthy communities in New Zealand. Greater attention must be paid to these and other areas in conjunction with an increase in Asian content in the education system.⁶

The present article has particular relevance in New Zealand's contemporary ethnoscape in several ways: 1) it focuses on cultural issues relating to immigration, identity and nationhood, topics that are often foregrounded in political and everyday discourse; 2) it explores some of the ways educators are teaching in communities with a high density of immigrants (Howick has one of New Zealand's largest Chinese communities); 3) it identifies how some secondary school students are reacting as immigrants or a minority in a search for an identity in New Zealand; and 4) it shows how creative

Identity": The Overseas Chinese at The University of Auckland" (Master's thesis, University of Auckland, 1995).

⁴ Compare Hong-Key Yoon, ed. *Vietnamese, Indonesian and Hong Kong Immigrants in Auckland*, Occasional Publication, no. 34 (Auckland: Department of Geography, University of Auckland, 1997).

⁵ Asia 2000 Foundation of New Zealand, *Seriously Asia: Summary Report* (Wellington: Asia 2000 Foundation of New Zealand, 2003); Christopher Butler, ed., *Seriously Asia Final Report*, compiled by Rebecca Foley (Wellington: Asia 2000 Foundation of New Zealand, 2004).

⁶ Rebecca Foley, "Government strategic Directions: Identifying Pathways for Collaboration," (paper presented at the Inaugural Asian Health Conference, November 2004), 14. On the adaptation of Asian students in New Zealand see Tracy Berno and Colleen Ward, "Cross-cultural and Educational Adaptation of Asian Students in New Zealand," commissioned paper (Wellington: Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2003).

communities contribute to the performing arts and well-being of a changing national identity as a result of recent Asian immigration.⁷

The paper's theoretical and methodological framework draws on music ethnographies and research methods that have featured in a range of ethnomusicological literature on diaspora and identity.⁸ Working within the area of diaspora ethnomusicology, the article aims to understand the phenomenon of Chinese lion dance performance in a secondary school and surrounding community context. As a growing and significant subfield of ethnomusicology that is defined in a variety of ways, diaspora ethnomusicology in New Zealand is a relatively new area of research with significance, especially in connection with the nation's considerable increase of Asian immigrants from the late 1980s.⁹ Building on other research on New Zealand topics in this area, I aim to contribute to this field by outlining and understanding one case-study while working within and across disciplines (i.e., ethnomusicology, Asian studies, music education and immigration studies).¹⁰

⁷ On ethnoscares among other "scapes" in the contemporary age of globalisation see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

⁸ See, for example, Jehoash Hirshberg, "In Search of a Model for Transplanted Music in Migrant Communities," *Musicology Australia* 15 (1992): 26-33; Kip Lornell and Anne K. Rasmussen, *Musics of Multicultural America: A Study of Twelve Communities* (New York: Schirmer, 1997); Ronald Riddle, *Flying Dragons, Flowing Streams, Music in the Life of San Francisco's Chinese* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983); Valerie B. Samson, "Chinese Music in the San Francisco Bay Area," *ACMR Reports: Journal of the Association for Chinese Music Research* 12 (1999): 82-99; Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993); Martin Stokes, ed., *Ethnicity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); Hae-kyung Um, ed., *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts: Translating Traditions* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005); Isobel K. F. Wong, "The Many Roles of Peking Opera in San Francisco in the 1980's," *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology* 6 (1985): 173; Deborah A. Wong, *Speak it Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁹ For an outline of the history of diaspora ethnomusicology see Mark Slobin, "The Destiny of 'Diaspora' in Ethnomusicology," in *The Cultural Study of Music*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2003): 284-96; Hae-kyung Um, "Introduction: Understanding Diaspora, Identity and Performance," in Hae-kyung Um, ed., *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts: Translating Traditions* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005): 1-13.

¹⁰ See Henry Johnson, "Performing Identity, Past and Present: Chinese Cultural Performance, New Year Celebrations, and the Heritage Industry, in *East by South: China in the Australasian Imagination*, ed. Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar and Keren Smith (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2005): 217-42; With Guil Figgins, "Diwali Downunder: Transforming and Performing Indian Tradition in Aotearoa/New Zealand," *New Zealand Journal of Media Studies* 9, no. 1 (2005): 25-35; Siong Ngor Ng, "The Chinese Community in Auckland: A Musical Ethnography and Musical History" (Masters thesis, University of Auckland, 2000); Benjamin Le Heux, "An Investigative and Documentary Study of Music and Change Within a Buddhist Community in Christchurch, New Zealand" (Masters thesis, University of Canterbury, 2002).

The data in this study were gathered using a multi-method approach to field research. An ethnographic study of the school and its Asian performance activities was undertaken, looking primarily at the lion dance, Chinese traditional dance, and Indian traditional dance. The lion dance was focussed on as a case-study for this paper, with the main period of field research centred on the school's Intercultural Week in April 2003, especially the food fair and flag ceremony on the last two days. Interviews were undertaken with key-informants who participated in these Asian performing arts, as well as the teachers who play an active part in the organisation of such activities, on several occasions.



Figure 1. Macleans College Lion Dance Group performing at the Chinese New Year celebration at St Patricks Cathedral in Auckland City. Photograph courtesy of Macleans College Lion Dance Group.

The paper shows that the Lion Dance Group at Macleans College (figure 1) is central in the performers' construction of Chinese cultural identity in the New Zealand context, and through this performance art they negotiate a place for themselves in contemporary, multicultural New Zealand – individually and collectively – at the school and in the wider community. Following this introduction the paper divides into two main parts. The first locates Macleans College in the ward of Howick in Auckland with the aim of showing how space and place are key underlying influences in the study, especially relating to the geographic distribution of New Zealand's Asian

communities. The second section is a case-study of the school's Lion Dance Group, where an ethnographic approach has been taken to describe and attempt to understand how and why the group exists and the reasons why the students perform. The performance of the Chinese lion dance in an Auckland suburb is a powerful statement of cultural identity. Several questions underpin this part of the study, each of which relates to the ethnographic method underpinning the data collection: "Who performs in the group?," "Where does the group perform?," "What does the group perform?," "Why does the group perform?," and "How is cultural identity constructed in this context?." While focussing on the performers and the lion dance's performance sites, underpinning questions such as these are intended to stress the places and spaces in which the group exists; the content of the performance display; and the reasons why the group showcase aspects of traditional Chinese culture in New Zealand. Also in this section, the school's practice and philosophy of co-curricular activities are explored, something that underpins many of the Asian performance activities at the school. The conclusions of this paper point to the implications that Chinese (and Asian in general) cultural display can have for educators, the community and for established, recent and new immigrants.

Locating Macleans College in an Era of New Immigration

As an immigrant nation, New Zealand has multifarious cultural diversity, something that is sometimes obfuscated in the essentialized dichotomy between Pākehā and Māori.¹¹ Among the country's various ethnic groups, Asians have made an enormous impact on the cultural makeup of New Zealand over the last few decades as a result of the relaxing of the immigration regulations in 1987. While Chinese migration to New Zealand has a history dating from the Otago gold rush, and early-settler Chinese now have an established history in Otago and elsewhere in the country that contributes to the heritage industry, the post-1987 wave of Asian migration to New Zealand witnessed a rapid increase in the country's Asian population, in particular Chinese, Indians and Koreans.¹²

¹¹ On New Zealand as an immigrant nation see especially Jane Roscoe, *Documentary in New Zealand: An Immigrant Nation* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1999).

¹² On New Zealand's historical and contemporary Chinese migrations see James Ng, *Windows on a Chinese Past. Vol 1: How the Cantonese Goldseekers and their Heirs Settled in New Zealand* (Dunedin: Otago Heritage Books, 1993); *Vol 2: Round Hill; Alexander Don; Missions; Mixed Marriages; the Opium Evil* (Dunedin: Otago Heritage Books, 1995); *Vol 3: Larrikinism and Violence; Immigration Issues; 20th Century Assimilation; Biographies* (Dunedin: Otago Heritage Books, 1999); Manying Ip, "Chinese New Zealanders: Old Settlers and New Immigrants," in *Immigration and National Identity in New Zealand: One People, Two Peoples, Many Peoples?*, ed. Stuart William Greif (Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1995): 161-99; *Dragons on the Long White Cloud: The Making of Chinese New Zealanders* (North Shore City: Tandem Press, 1996); "Introduction," in *Re-Examining Chinese Transnationalism in Australia-New Zealand*, ed.

According to Statistics New Zealand, Asians made up 6.6 percent of New Zealand's population in 2001 (it was 3 percent in 1991).¹³ Around 240,000 or 1 in 15 people were of Asian ethnicity, which is slightly more than the number of people of Pacific island ethnicity. Auckland City had the highest number of residents of Asian ethnicity, which was almost 1 in 5. Within this broad grouping, the Chinese community was the largest, comprising 44 percent of the Asian population (Indians were 26 percent and Koreans 8 percent). A large number of the Asian community are in the 15-24 years age group, and in 2001 this figure was around 20 percent, compared with 14 percent for the whole of New Zealand.¹⁴ The census figures identified several spheres of identity of Chineseness (Table 1). As shown in Table 2, the actual place of birth of Chinese New Zealanders was proportionally higher for the overseas born population.

Table 1: Chinese Ethnic Groups (2001 census categories)

Chinese Group	Population
Chinese (not further defined)	100,203
Hong Kong Chinese	87
Kampuchean Chinese	12
Malaysian Chinese	489
Singaporean Chinese	303
Vietnamese Chinese	69
Taiwanese Chinese	3,768
Chinese (not elsewhere classified)	48
Total People, Chinese Ethnic Groups	104,580

Source: Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings: Asian People* (Wellington: Statistics New Zealand, 2002): 19.

Table 2: Place of Birth of Chinese in New Zealand (2001 census)

New Zealand Born	Overseas Born	Not Elsewhere Included	Total
25,899	78,567	591	105,057

Manying Ip (Canberra: Centre for the Study of the Southern Chinese Diaspora, The Australian National University, 2001): 9-12.

¹³ Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings: Asian People* (Wellington: Statistics New Zealand, 2002). See also www.stats.govt.nz. On the ethnic diversity of New Zealand see especially Barbara Thomson, *Ethnic Diversity in New Zealand: A Statistical Profile*, Ethnic Affairs Service Information Series, no. 3 (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1999).

¹⁴ See www.stats.govt.nz.

Source: Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings: Asian People* (Wellington: Statistics New Zealand, 2002): 59.

According to Statistics New Zealand, in 2001 66 percent of New Zealand's Asian community lived in the Auckland Region.¹⁵ With a population of around 1.2 million people, the Auckland Region divides into four cities: Auckland City, Northshore City, Waitakere City and Manukau City. Manukau has seven wards and a population of 283,197. One of these wards, Howick, is located 22 kilometres southeast of central Auckland. It is well known as a place that has high numbers of Chinese, among other Asians, and the visibility of Asia in Howick is particularly noticeable with an abundance of shop signage in Chinese, Hindi and Korean, demonstrating that it is not an enclosed ethnic community nor a ghetto.¹⁶ The name "Howick" itself has even been modified in derogatory discourse to "Chowick" as a way of indicating the ward's high number of Chinese residents. According to population statistics on Manukau city, Howick has the second highest number of Asians of the city's wards (Pakuranga ward, which neighbours Howick, has the highest at 24 percent, and Clevedon the lowest at 3 percent).¹⁷ As New Zealand historian James Ng comments:

By 1996, it was estimated that residents in Howick had become about one third Asian, most of them Chinese Whole new streets were being added on the periphery of Howick and about half the new houses were being sold to Asians ... Chinese were often 'buying down', having sold their dwellings in their previous homeland for a much higher price.¹⁸

Three main reasons why Howick today has a proportionally high number of Chinese New Zealand in comparison to the rest of New Zealand might be suggested. Firstly, for recent immigrants, Howick was in the early 1990s developing as a suburb on the outskirts of Auckland city. Its new housing with relatively low maintenance sections and close proximity to the sea provided a much sought after location for Chinese. Secondly, Macleans College already had a good reputation as a secondary provider and was highly regarded by new members of the Asian community. And, thirdly, as more Chinese came to the ward a sense of community developed, something that seems to have perpetuated further settlement. Such was the population growth of this part of greater Auckland that Botany Downs, which is just

¹⁵ See www.stats.govt.nz. See also Thomson, *Ethnic Diversity*, 191.

¹⁶ www.stats.govt.nz; Sarah Elizabeth Redmond, "Asian Immigrants in Howick: Ethnic Boundary Negotiation" (Masters thesis, University of Waikato, 1995).

¹⁷ See www.manukau.govt.nz/quick1.htm.

¹⁸ James Ng, "Chinese Settlement in New Zealand, Past and Present;" available from www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/history/chinesesettlement.htm. Accessed 31 October 2005.

south of Howick, now boasts the largest shopping centre in the southern hemisphere.

Macleans College is a secondary school located in Howick, very close to the border of Pakuranga ward.¹⁹ It was opened in 1980 and now has a roll of around 2200 students. In 2003, while the school had just 107 foreign fee-paying students, a large percentage of its students identified themselves with an Asian ethnicity (Table 3), thus reflecting the high number of Asian peoples in Howick.²⁰

Table 3: Ethnicity of Students at Macleans College (2003)

Ethnicity	% of school's students
Pākehā	39
Chinese	21
Other European	17
Other Asian	6
Korean	5
Māori	1
Other	11

Source: Education Review Office, www.ero.govt.nz. Accessed 31 October 2005.

(Per)forming Identity

The Performers. Organisations, societies and other community groups do much to provide support for established and recent Chinese immigrants, and each helps nurture a sense of community in the host country. Macleans College Lion Dance Group (hereafter LDG) operates in a similar way, giving students at the school the opportunity to create a sense of Chinese community, to maintain a traditional performance art, and to provide a link to the wider community by showcasing the lion dance during public performance. In terms of notions of space and place, Macleans College occupies a unique contact zone in the contemporary New Zealand ethnoscape, and the place of the lion dance at this school is something that some of the school's students utilise in order to consolidate or construct an

¹⁹ There are other schools in Howick with Asian students, the secondary schools being Howick College and Cascade Christian College. The ethnic makeup of these schools in 2003 and 2002 respectively was as follows. Howick College: Pākehā 63%, Māori 4%, Chinese 14%, Indian 6%, Korean 5%, Taiwanese 3%, Pacific 2%, Other 3%; Cascade Christian College: Pākehā 65%, Māori 2%, South African 12%, Indian 3%, Pacific 2%, Chinese 2%, Other 14%. See further Education Review Office, www.ero.govt.nz.

²⁰ Education Review Office, "Report on Macleans College" (Auckland: Education Review Office, 2003): 8. Many of the school's web pages are shown in several languages: English, Chinese and Korean. See www.macleans.school.nz.

idea of Chinese cultural identity – real or imagined – in the New Zealand environment. In the same way that Anderson argued on imagined communities in the construction of nationhood, LDG constructs its own real community, albeit with an imagined sense of Chineseness that gives it purpose as a mediator through which to negotiate and display that identity.²¹

LDG is primarily a school-based club with its members being students of the school, although the group does have community links in terms of its organisation and performance sites. LDG consists of dancers and musicians. Two dancers perform the lion dance (there is usually one lion, although two occasionally perform): one person is the head, the other the tail. The three musicians play percussion instruments: drum (large, upright, double-headed barrel drum), gong, and cymbals (sometimes two pairs of cymbals are used). In 2003, each of the performers identified with Chinese ethnicity (in past years one of the lion dancers, the tail, was Pākehā). While the group is open to any of the school's students, LDG provides a space for some students to associate with others from the same ethnicity – in this case Chinese because of the traditional “home” of the Chinese lion dance. In 2003 when data were collected for this research, LDG had five main senior members (it also had junior members who were being trained by the older students): two male dancers and three female musicians (referred to individually as D1-D2 and M1-3).²² The small number in the group in comparison to the large number of students at the school is explained in several ways: firstly, a lion dance troupe is necessarily small, having just two dancers per lion and several musicians (only with more lion heads and costumes, which are expensive, could the school accommodate more students in the group); secondly, one of the functions of the group is to display Chinese culture, and in doing so represents the culture as a focal point without possible competition from another group; and thirdly, the social unit that the group has formed – one that changes to a certain extent each year as students come and go – has community connections in its organisation that allows it to maintain authority and respect from the school, the students and the wider community.

During field research with the group, the dancers were especially forthcoming about what they did and why they did it. D1 is eighteen years old and president of the Intercultural Club. He was born in New Zealand and identified himself as a Chinese New Zealander. He has been performing the lion dance for about three years, and is the lion's tail. D1 mentioned that he and the other dancer, D2, are now learning from videos because they had exhausted the knowledge that had been taught to them by former students and key local dancers and musicians. D2 is seventeen years old. He has been in New Zealand for about six years, coming from Taiwan. His family moved to Howick having at first lived elsewhere in New Zealand. He identified himself on several levels: Chinese, Taiwanese and New Zealander. He is the

²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991).

²² A male gong player is shown in the photos on LDG's web pages (see www.geocities.com/lionist2k/photos.htm).

lion's head. D1 has been learning the lion dance for about four years, having learned from his father and from former LDG students. D1 and D2 mentioned that they now teach younger students, helping to maintain the tradition at the school. In this context the performers become teachers and the main bearers of the tradition that they have created in this context. M1 and M2 are sisters and have been playing the lion dance instruments for several years (M3 was unavailable for interview). M1 was born in New Zealand, and M2 in Australia. M2 moved to New Zealand with her parents, who were from Hong Kong, about sixteen years ago.

LDG performs for several reasons. For D1, performance in LDG is something that helps him carry on Chinese tradition. Through performance he can showcase Chinese culture, and during performance he is motivated by applause and shouts of encouragement. He is extremely proud that LDG is the only lion dance troupe in the Eastern suburbs. For D1, LDG is about the merger of two different cultures, something that he acted out by requiring the lion to hold the New Zealand flag during a performance in the school's Intercultural Week. D1 loves performing and thinks that LDG symbolises a harmonious relationship between Chinese and New Zealanders. Likewise, D2 enjoys performing, especially the reaction of the audience when it gets excited about his performance. He too noted that there are not many lion dancers in Auckland and that what they are doing is unique in Howick. Relating to cultural background, M1 notes that "I enjoy performing at school because then I can demonstrate skills [...] also let my friends understand where my time is used on [...] then they can understand my culture and my background."

For the members of LDG, an identity is negotiated as a result of coming together for the lion dance performance. The students who participate in this school and community activity have an increased sense of Chineseness, identity, social well-being, and belonging. The commonality between the students is ethnic or cultural, and, unlike some diaspora communities who have a nation commonality, the members of LDG, as well as many other Chinese in New Zealand, share an identity that spreads across several nations. D1 and D2 both said that they see performing as an opportunity for the Chinese students at Macleans, who might have not seen a Lion dance, to experience some of their own traditional culture and performing arts.²³ Sentiments such as these demonstrate a desire to show where one is from in a context that expresses where one is now. Moreover, M2 notes that "you wouldn't really have a chance to learn culture or anything except through the culture that's here," and that in connection with Chinese language: "the fact that we are involved in a Chinese church that's the only reason we really know the language." She continued by noting that she was a bit insecure when performing for an all-Chinese audience as she felt that they

²³ Icons of Chineseness are also visible at the school with wall paintings that depict symbols of Chinese culture.

could be more critical because it had more meaning for them, whereas she felt that a European audience would just be looking for entertainment.

Performance Sites and Community Links. Macleans College has compulsory co-curricular activities as part of every student's education. The co-curricular activities are not assessed, but every student must participate in:

- At least one major sporting, cultural or service activity;
- College activities, before participating in outside groups or clubs; and
- Auckland Secondary Schools or inter-house competitions.²⁴

The philosophy underpinning this practice is stressed in the school's publicity. For example, the 2003 college prospectus notes "co-curricular involvement is a vital aspect of the Macleans 'package', encouraging loyalty, commitment, self-confidence and comradeship."²⁵ (Teachers also participate in the activities.)

The idea of forging partnerships between school and community is something that is noted in *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*.²⁶ The draft of this curriculum was criticized for not articulating sufficiently the need for a range of community partners in the arts:

In arts education there is a need for the notion of partnerships with other groups in the community to come to the fore. . . . Schools, teachers and students can add value to students' learning by collaborating with, and drawing upon the resources available to them from, a range of partners and stakeholders in the wider community having an interest in, promoting or actually engaged in, various versions of the educational enterprise, and particularly those associated with the arts.²⁷

In connection with music education, the importance of co-curricular activities has been emphasized by Leung.²⁸ Described under various terms, including

²⁴ Macleans College, "College prospectus" (Howick: Macleans College, 2004): np.

²⁵ Macleans College, "College prospectus" (Howick: Macleans College, 2003): 8.

²⁶ See Ministry of Education, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Wellington: Learning Media, 2000). For critical perspectives on arts in education in New Zealand see Elizabeth M. Grierson, and Janet E. Mansfield, eds., *The Arts in Education: Critical Perspectives from Aotearoa New Zealand* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2003). Regarding collaboration with new migrant and refugee communities in New Zealand see Wong Liu Sheung, "Active Collaboration with New Migrant and Refugee Communities: A Process of Unfolding Cultural Assumptions" (paper presented at the Social Policy Research & Evaluation Conference, *Connecting Policy Research & Practice*, April 2003).

²⁷ Education Forum, *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum. A Submission on the Draft* (Auckland: Education Forum, 1999): 65.

²⁸ Chi Cheung Leung, "Extra-curricular Music Activities in Hong Kong Secondary Schools," *Music Education Research* 5, no. 2 (2003): 183-97.

co-curricular, extra-curricular, and third curriculum, such activities “enhance and strengthen the content and quality of the curriculum.”²⁹ In Leung’s study, it is noted that some “traditional” musical activities, such as the learning of Chinese instruments in Hong Kong, is particularly rare as the main curriculum emphasizes Western music. That focus on Western music among the performing arts is something that is also grounded in the New Zealand arts curriculum. While there is space for inclusion of the music and arts of other cultures, in practice Macleans College does not have the staff to teach or encourage such a multicultural approach to music education in the classroom. In the context of co-curricular activities the emphasis is on a community-oriented approach to learning, especially for the cultural well-being of students of an Asian ethnicity. Interviews with staff and students revealed that the students themselves wanted to learn Western performing arts in the classroom, relating to standard music practices in music education in Leung’s study, and leave their traditional arts for the co-curricular activities.³⁰

In terms of music education as one of the performing arts, at Macleans College intercultural musical activities have a particular community emphasis outside the curriculum in the co-curricular activities. Still, in connection with music education, “networks of individuals and institutions who bring a rich variety of expertise in support of curricular and sequential programs can strengthen music learning opportunities and build a sustainable base for music education.”³¹

Among various cultural and sporting activities that are considered co-curricular pursuits, the Intercultural Club, which has around two hundred and fifty members, has an important place in school life considering the high number of Asian students attending Macleans College. There is an array of smaller clubs within the Intercultural Club, including Kiwi, Spanish, Japanese, Malaysian, German, Publicity, Middle-Eastern, Asian, French, Arts and Crafts, Intercultural Choir, Ballroom Dance, Lion Dance, Indian Dance, Chinese Dance, Korean Drums/Dance, and Sports clubs. The idea of an intercultural programme at school dates from around the mid-1990s, when it experienced rapid growth in its intake of Asian students. The philosophy behind this programme was not one of assimilation, but of integration that would honour all cultures and encourage students to experience other cultures.³² As its 2002 president Tiveshni Naidoo noted, the Intercultural

²⁹ Ibid., 184.

³⁰ On issues regarding Asia in the school classroom see Pauline B. Keating, *Knowing Asia: The Challenge For New Zealand’s Tertiary Education Sector* (Wellington: New Zealand Asian Studies Society, 2004), Chapter 4 (by David Keen).

³¹ David E. Myers, “Quest for Excellence: The Transforming Role of University-Community Collaboration in Music Teaching and Learning,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 105, no. 1 (2003): 10.

³² Compare Ng Bickleen Fong, *The Chinese in New Zealand: A Study of Assimilation* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1959).

Club “aims to promote racial and cultural unity within the school and community.”³³

The Intercultural Club hosts various events throughout the year, sometimes varying from year to year, including Race Unity Day celebrations, Friendship Day, Chinese Valentines Day, Kiwis Abroad Experience, and the highlight of the year, Intercultural Week, which was at first held in the last week of the third term, but in 2003 changed to the last week of the first term (in April). As parts of the School’s Arts Week, the Intercultural Week includes such cultural displays as music, dance, a flag day (not held every year), and food. It is intended to raise awareness of different cultures and to share cultural ideas. In 2003, the Intercultural Week, which was held in April, had an array of events culminating in a food festival on the last day (Table 4). The Lion Dance Group performs at some of these events, and is always present as a highlight during Intercultural Week.

Table 4 Intercultural Week (2003)	
Day	Activity
Monday	Martial Arts Demonstration, Haka
Tuesday	Exchange Students’ Talk
Wednesday	Quizzes and Challenges (with prizes). Winner of the Window Competition announced
Thursday	Food Festival
Friday	Fair Day. Flag Pageant during school assembly

Source: Macleans College Intercultural Week brochure (2003).

The Chinese lion dance is a performance event that is especially visible at the time of the Chinese New Year (January or February, depending on the lunar calendar).³⁴ The Chinese New Year is a major attraction at Howick, as it is in many other centres in New Zealand, which usually extends over fifteen days and ends with the Lantern Festival. It is also found at many other times of celebration, and nowadays even in competition. LDG perform at many of the celebrations at the school, as outlined above, in particular Intercultural Week. The importance of the group in terms of school and community relations was noted in the school magazine in 2002, which commented that LDG had been in existence for four years, and during this time had served the community and honoured Chinese culture.³⁵ Moreover, several key members of the

³³ Macleans College, “School magazine” (Howick: Macleans College, 2002): 49.

³⁴ On the Chinese lion dance see Wan-Yu Liu, *The Chinese Lion Dance* (MA dissertation, York University, 1981).

³⁵ Macleans College, “School magazine,” 49.

Chinese community contribute to the group in terms of teaching, donations and organisation. Also, the group's main lion mask was received with the help of a community grant, and a drum and the costumes were funded with help of a Chinese family.

A LDG performance is a visual and aural spectacle of music, colourful costumes and dynamic movement. The performance is accompanied by a drum and metal percussion; two lion masks are painted very brightly in yellow, red, green, blue and white; the performers are dressed in bright yellow and red costumes; and the lions move in a dynamic and dramatic way. The group has four dance sequences and is now learning a fifth (before 2001 it had just one sequence). The 2002 president of the Intercultural Club, Tiveshni Naidoo, has noted that LDG performed during Intercultural Week with "a brilliant blaze of culture and tradition that astounded the audience in an array of movements that brought the Lion to life."³⁶

On the final day of Intercultural Week in 2003, the area put aside for the food fair was a large open space that was lined with flags from the different countries represented by students at the school. After the initial rush on the food, a teacher cleared a space in the centre, some long seats were placed in an L shape, and LDG appeared in brightly-coloured traditional yellow costumes with musicians playing drum, gong and cymbals, accompanying the movements of the lion figure. The instruments and costumes had been donated to the school by a former lion dance teacher and member of the Chinese community, and the performers were very proud of the lion costume as they had laid it out in the centre of the performance area for all to see well before the performance had started. The performance started with a drum roll and the crash of the cymbals, with the lion moving around the outside of the dance area and interacting with the students by going up close to them, winking and weaving. This caused some Chinese students to shout out words of encouragement. The dancers then climbed up onto the seats to perform a comic balancing act. It was during this part of the performance that the dancers picked up a New Zealand flag in the lions mouth and continued along a beam waving it for all to see. This met with a response consisting of clapping and cheering. The performance ended with a round of applause and calls for an encore, which did not happen.

As well as performing at the school during various times of celebrations, LDG also performs to the wider community. In 2003, when field research with LDG was undertaken, the group had performed at five different venues that year, sometimes raising funds for the Intercultural Club, the school or for a charity. Such community-based performances included performing in front of the Chinese Women's association and at St Patrick's Cathedral in central Auckland.³⁷ LDG has also performed in front of young school children that were scared by the display but also enjoyed it. The

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ LDG's website shows the larger group at a New Year performance at St Patrick's Cathedral in Auckland during the Chinese New Year (see www.geocities.com/lionist2k/photos.htm).

Intercultural Day Concert in 2003, which was held in Botany Downs Town Centre on 2 August, included six performing arts and sports groups from Macleans College: traditional Chinese dance; lion dance; modern Indian dance; ballroom dance; taekwondo; and barbershop quartet and choir. The fundraising for this event was for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) project on famine in Ethiopia and Iraq. The importance of school/community relations was evident in the brochure of this event, which noted that the Intercultural Club aims "not only to localise our activities within the school, but to also start making contributions to the community." The Vice-President of the Intercultural Club, who is particularly active in helping to organise LDG, stressed these links by noting that "as a club as a whole [...] we are trying to go out into the community, not just performing within school because we want to spread the word and let everyone know what intercultural club is and spread intercultural values and just let Europeans and Asians know about Lion dance." She herself joined the Club in order to learn about her cultural identity, coming to New Zealand from Hong Kong about eight years ago.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the Lion Dance Group at Macleans College, Auckland, is using this particular context and performing art to help discover, construct and negotiate Chinese cultural identity in the New Zealand context. While it is not surprising that immigrant communities are continuing traditions of performing arts of their homeland in their new home, this particular study has highlighted some of the remarkable ways that Chinese student immigrants, or of immigrant ancestry, in the New Zealand environment are finding their own cultural identity as a result of performing the lion dance in New Zealand.

Some of the research findings do much to highlight how host country context can help shape cultural identity, especially a rediscovery of homeland culture. The ward of Howick does have a proportionally high number of immigrants of Chinese ethnicity, as well as one of the country's highest densities of Asian people in general. Hence, Macleans College naturally has a high number of Chinese students. Within music education there are no obvious links with the Chinese community, and it is only through compulsory co-curricular activities that some students have discovered the lion dance. The Lion Dance Group brings together students of different Chinese backgrounds, having travelled through different routes to and within New Zealand, and does much to help them form an identity in New Zealand based on their idea of Chinese cultural roots. Most of the students had never learned the lion dance before participating in Macleans College co-curricular activities, and each felt very proud of what they were doing. The students seemed to relish the fact that they could showcase their culture at the school and in the wider community. In this context, the students discovered what

they perceived was a part of their tradition, part of their heritage, and part of their individual and collective cultural identity. However, this identity was only forged once the students had found the lion dance at Macleans College, and it was nurtured as a result of the Lion Dance Group's performance activities, a process that included an organisation (i.e., LDG), coming together to learn, helping others to learn, learning from key community members, discovering new dances through watching videos, performing to other students, performing to the wider community, and, above all, forming social and cultural links with other members of the group.

While this study has outlined several key points regarding the construction of cultural identity for LDG students, the findings show that the Howick ward of Manukau city is an interesting and diverse place of change (as is neighbouring Pakuranga ward). It also shows that as these students come through the school, they introduce traditional performing arts to their peers at school and the public in the wider community. For the students of LDG, the creation of an identity is perhaps partly based around what they have found or experienced in New Zealand. In reaction to coming to a new place and new cultural context, many are taking a deeper interest in, and reproducing aspects of, the cultural setting that they have left behind. These identities, however, are complicated and can be based around different factors, for example, ethnicity and/or nationalism. Moreover, multiple cultural identities can be formed through the process of performing in different spaces and places and to diverse audiences.

For the students of LDG, cultural display in the form of the Chinese lion dance is pivotal for not only school-community relations, but also for the students in their self-identity in New Zealand. Identity is performed through the lion dance; it is also formed as a result of LDG activities. The students lead hybrid lives, mixing homeland and host country identities and heritage, but they acquire a sense of belonging as a result of coming together in LDG. This study, therefore, has helped show that through the lion dance group of an Auckland secondary school, cultural heritage is discovered, performed and showcased to other students and to the wider community. Identities are formed and performed as a result of these confluences. LDG is central to the construction of identity of students in several ways. It is a cultural display that is intended to celebrate culture; it brings students together with a common cultural bond; it creates school-community partnerships and relations; and it showcases one of New Zealand's creative communities that contribute to the contemporary make-up of national identity.