Matato’a
is a musical and dance group from Rapa Nui (Easter island- Chili). This most isolated island of the world, lost in the middle of the Pacific Ocean (5 hours of flight from Chili or Tahiti), is very famous by his giant and enigmatic stones: the Moai. The group begun its musical career in 1997, by recording the music generic ”E nua e koro” of the television serie ”Iorana” (Chilian production TVN). The originality of the group is to mix the modern style (rhythm and instruments) to the ”RIU” (traditional songs about love, happiness, sadness, nature, etc.). This perfect fusion of the modern instruments (guitars, keyboard, battery) and the traditional ones (stones, horse jaws, Bombo, etc.) gives a very nice and various repertory of different music and style songs (Rapa Nui, Polynesian, Reggae, Latino, etc.). They mix the styles also in their stage costumes: wearing personal modern clothes, traditional costumes (feathers and natural fibbers) and ”TAKONA” (corporal identity painting) always created by them. They impress, attract and lead to the dance everyone during their show with their dance music, the ”HOKO” (dances and songs to express the Mana) and personal choreographies renew at each concert. Matato’a has succeed to unify the ancestral Rapa Nui culture, based on the music, dances and songs, to the actual tendencies of the insular modern youth. Now, their desire is to promote their music and original culture in the rest of the world. This peaceful Pacific “warriors” represent proudly their island and one day Rapa Nui will be know not only by his Moai...!

The Polynesian Cultural Center
was established by the Mormons to help to preserve the cultural heritage of Polynesia and to provide educational opportunities for students attending the adjoining Brigham Young University-Hawaii-Campus. BYU-Hawaii is a four-year liberal arts college that serves two thousand students from the islands of Polynesia, Asia, the United States, and other countries. Since the Center opened in 1963, over 25 000 students from the islands have taken part in the ”aloha experiment” – approximately 600 BYU-Hawai’i students are currently working their way through school as guides, musicians, dancers, demonstrators, and the service personal. One-third of them are also on scholarship sponsored by the Polynesian Cultural Center. Up to now, 25 million friends have become part of this ”experiment”. Horizons...Where the Sun Meets the Sky, is our newest and most spectacular evening show. It shares the grace, the beauty and heritage of Hawai’i, Tonga, Aotearoa [Neuseeland], Fiji, Tahiti and Samoa.

Whale Rider.
"This novel¹ was set in Whangara [Provinz Neuseelands] and it would almost have been heresy to shoot anywhere else," says Producer John Barnett. "From the very beginning I was adamant that it should be shot entirely at Whangara." One of Tim Sanders' first tasks was to re-instigate contact with the Maori community at Whangara, with the help of Ihimaera. "I drove down from Auckland and had a meeting with Hone Taumanu who’s the kaumatua [”chief”] of this area to re-establish the town’s support for the project," he recalls. "I knew at that stage that with the blessing of these people here, we’d have a very good chance at capturing the essence of this place."

"Working at Whangara has had a whole lot of benefits including the ability to use the local people in our background cast and extras," adds Sanders. "I think in many of the scenes everyone will notice that there is a feeling of genuineness about our cast. People will probably be surprised to learn that many of the people in smaller roles and our extras are actually locals - untrained, but of course very familiar with the Paika legend [Legende vom ”Wal-Reiter”] and with their surroundings here. So in a genuine setting such as this, using the real local people has paid off for us in a big way."

¹ Legende: „New Zealand’s indigenous Maori say that their ancestors came to New Zealand on a canoe. The people in Whangara and the East Coast believe their ancestor, Paika, came on the back of a whale. The whale rescued him when his canoe over-turned.” Witi Ihimaera machte aus dieser Legende 1985 einen aktuellen Roman mit einem Mädchen als Heldin, der 2002 als Film-Drehbuch verwendet wurde.