

**MEDIA RELEASE: AOTEAROA PROMOTIONS  
MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2005**

**Hari Huritau Ki a Barry White**

The late soul legend Barry White would have turned 61 today had he still been alive. White died in July 2003 after suffering years of high blood pressure which led to kidney failure.

The music icon will be the focus of four NZ concerts next month, spearheaded by kaumatua entrepreneur, 71 year old Sam Pehi Snr. His company *Aotearoa Promotions* is the latest venture for Sam, a musician, entertainer and tennis champ who has owned hotels, taxis, nightclubs and casinos for the past forty years.

During the 1980s Sam was one of the first to introduce karaoke in Auckland and says he enjoyed singing Tom Jones and Barry White because it suited his voice.

Earlier this year though he was blown away when he saw a Barry White performer of a different kind in a Gold Coast casino – Australian based Maori musician Ash Puriri. New Zealand born Ash wowed 12 million Aussie viewers of the top rating Australian show *Star Struck* this year with his perfect impersonation of Barry White. Even musician George Benson called him the “real deal”, giving him a standing ovation at Conrad Jupiter’s Casino on Australia’s Gold Coast.

“When he was in full makeup and costume Ash looked and sounded exactly like Barry White,” says Sam, “but he could also do John Rowles and Prince Tui Teka songs just as good. And then when he sang some of Pavarotti’s opera songs, I knew this man had something extra special.”

Seizing the opportunity, Sam got on the phone to Ash and his agent to propose a series of NZ concerts. After several meetings, the deal was finalised over a meal of pork bones and watercress at Sam’s house with Ash and his father.

The four concerts will be held in Wellington (October 5), Palmerston North (October 6), Hamilton (October 7) and Auckland (October 8).

The concerts will feature Ash’s Big Band sound and Vegas Girl Dancers with a blend of his Barry White show and Ash in Concert show. Compered by Maori actor and entertainer, Pio Terei, Ash in Concert will present a collage of contemporary smash hits songs and famous big voices of the past. He will also pay tribute to Billy T-James, Prince Tui Teka, Ricky May, John Rowles and Sir Howard Morrison and make a special dedication to Inia Te Wiata and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa.

Sam says one of the aims behind Aotearoa Promotions is promoting Maori business and success, especially international Kiwi musicians. And as a fan of Barry White, Sam says he’s glad he’s helping to keep the legend’s music alive.

**Ends**

**For more information contact:**

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**[www.ashinconcert.com](http://www.ashinconcert.com)** (\*view excerpts of his Barry White show online)

**Concert venues and dates:**

Tickets can be purchased from Ticketek for Wellington and Auckland shows and TicketDirect for Palmerston North & Hamilton. Tickets are \$55 (booking fees may apply)

5 <sup>th</sup> October 2005 <b>Wellington</b>	The Opera House 111-113 Manners Street <b>Wellington</b> <a href="http://www.ticketek.com">www.ticketek.com</a>
6 <sup>th</sup> October 2005 <b>Palmerston North</b>	Regent Auditorium 63 Broadway Avenue <b>Palmerston North</b> 0800 4 TICKET
7 <sup>th</sup> October 2005 <b>Hamilton</b>	Community Theatre (previously known as Westpac Community Theatre) <b>Hamilton</b> 0800 4 TICKET
8 <sup>th</sup> October 2005 <b>Auckland</b>	Beaumont Centre, Auckland 98 Beaumont Street, Freeman's Bay, <b>Auckland</b> <a href="http://www.ticketek.com">www.ticketek.com</a>



*The Barry White Tribute Tour First class sponsor*

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