

Aramoana

Inspired!

Maairie Goodall's 1991 *Aramoana* pianoforte solo

Gillian Whitehead's *Low Tide Aramoana* from 1982 for large choir, mezzo-soprano, three trumpets, two trombones and timpani.

Digging deeper...

The 2006 film *Into the Blue* by New Zealand director Duncan Sarkies was based on the fatal shooting of 13 victims by Aramoana resident David Gray in 1990.

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The children's book *Frank and Sam's Summer at Aramoana* by Lianne Farry is based on Frank, a one-eyed New Zealand sea lion who frequented the Aramoana beach for years.

The spit at Aramoana near the mouth of the Otago Harbour is an additively beautiful sweep of beach with the Pacific Ocean on one side and a protected wildlife sanctuary on the other. The small settlement numbers about 260 permanent residents.

Looking towards the ocean you can see Taiaroa Head on the opposite side of the harbour mouth, capped with its lighthouse and the buildings associated with the albatross colony. When you shift your gaze northwards, there are rows of Otago hills shading from green to purple. In between, you might catch sight of a container ship heading to or from Port Chalmers.

Major human intervention takes the form of 'the mole', constructed by the Otago Harbour Board in the late 19th century to help impede the sanding up of the harbour channel. It heads out to sea in a long straight line; James K Baxter described it as the 'black asphalt tongue' in *To Aramoana*. Today, it provides a good viewing platform for seal spotting, a popular area for divers, and an appealing location for fishing. If you are a keen cyclist, the ride there from Port Chalmers is a recommended day out.

A lot of important New Zealand art has been made about Aramoana, much of it by the mostly Dunedin-based artists and writers in opposition to a multi-national aluminium smelter proposed in the early 1980s. Happily, protesting proved effective and the smelter project was abandoned.



The beach, the mole, Taiaroa Head and the Pacific Ocean beyond



Detail of the mole

