

low stature, and p.30 tells us that tapa was grown between rows of breadfruit. At p.56, the last entry, we find that the tapa plant is 'the aute or paper mulberry tree, the source of tapa in the tropics'. Not in New Zealand too? No botanical name in the text (but one is given in the index displaced from aute, tapa or paper mulberry so it is not very helpful). And no illustration. Is *Broussonetia papyrifera* a 'tree' or a 'plant', and like what? Did New Zealanders make a cloth from the bark? And was the cultivation in New Zealand a gardening as is the case in the tropics? If aute deserved some attention, what about autetaranga (*Pimelia arenaria*), which is not mentioned at all?

Nor, puzzlingly, is there any mention of karaka, *Corynocarpus laevigata*, although Karaka Bay appears. In view of the place which karaka once held in debate over introduced species and in view of what Leach recognizes of tawa and hinau, why no karaka? The machinery of the book is not impeccable, as these few examples show.

However vulnerable, *1000 Years of Gardening in New Zealand* has much to commend it. It is likely to be popular and re-issued. In that event, cutting back Chapter 5, 'The development of the English kitchen garden tradition' (pp.73-97) and enlarging Chapters 6 and 7 (pp.98-130) would help, by allowing for what is at present set aside, the matter of flowers and ornamentals which are surely rather too firmly separated from the utilitarian. Dr Leach's own citations on p.113 do not endorse her stand.

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN

University of Auckland

A History of Otago. By Erik Olssen. John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1984. 270 pp., illus. N.Z. price: \$39.95.

THE FIRST POINT to make about this book is an obvious one. It is superbly presented, one of the most handsome books I have seen in a long while. The lovely colour plates, the more than 150 black and white illustrations, and the strong, clear type-face make it a delight to hold, to see, and to skim through.

It is also a delight to read. A reverence for tradition, a concern to preserve past glories has always been alive and well in Otago, and one of the results of this has been a regional historiography much more extensive and much richer than in any other part of New Zealand. In the Centennial year of 1948, for example, as well as the fireworks at Hancock Park, the procession down George Street and the solemn pageant at First Church, no less than 20 volumes of local or district history appeared, together with A. H. McLintock's huge and idiosyncratic *History of Otago*. Since then, a number of university theses and dissertations, often written under Professor Olssen's direction at the University of Otago, have joined the continuing stream of memoirs and local histories to provide him with a rich lode to mine for this most recent attempt to describe and explain Otago's distinctiveness.

For it is the issue of continuing provincial identity in a nation become at once more complex and less diverse that is Olssen's main theme, and it must be said that he sustains it exceedingly well. The story at one level is a familiar one. In direct, spare

prose, he takes us through the prehistory of the province, the life style and accomplishments of the Maori (Johnny Jones does not even appear until Chapter 3), the first contact between Maori and Pakeha, and then in Chapter 5, the arrival of the *John Wycliffe* and the *Philip Laing* and the beginning of the Free Church's 'godly experiment.' The struggle to survive, to give substance to the various dreams and ambitions of men like Cargill, Burns, and McAndrew occupied the first fifteen years or so of settlement, before gold, as it did in neighbouring Victoria, radically altered the course of the province's development. Gold brought men to Otago, thousands of them, and not the god-fearing sort the founding fathers would have preferred. It also brought investment. Gold and the consequences made Otago the wealthiest province in New Zealand and Dunedin became the colony's commercial and industrial centre, the counterpart in the late nineteenth century, albeit on a much smaller scale, of 'Marvellous Melbourne'.

But, as with Melbourne, prosperity did not last. Indeed the decline had begun before the turn of the century, as the pace of development in the North Island quickened, following the end of the fighting between Maori and Pakeha, the opening up of new lands for farming and the perfection of refrigerating techniques. Otago had lost its economic pre-eminence by 1900, its population continued to grow but at a much slower rate than that of its northern neighbours, the belief in progress, so much a part of the late nineteenth century air, already gone. The Great War, the troubled twenties, and the depression served simply to reinforce this sense of evanescence. Indeed Olssen interprets the history of twentieth century Otago as in large part a dwelling on past glories in the face of present stagnation and decline, and argues that this is a crucial component in shaping Otago's identity.

But for Olssen, and I believe he is right, the key to explaining the province's character can be found in its ethnic and social origins. It was the Scots who gave the province its distinctiveness, a distinctiveness which persists. 'Yet the final reflections, ironically, draw us back to the beginnings,' he writes in the book's concluding paragraph. 'The influx of Scottish immigrants and the Presbyterian predominance have contributed greatly to the moral and social climate of Otago. . . . Only Eastern Ontario and Nova Scotia in Canada can boast of an equally sizeable influx of Scots. Within New Zealand, thus, Otago has been a sheet-anchor for Scottish as distinct from English perspectives and, since the 1880s emigrants from the province have helped to build the nation.' Anyone who grew up in Otago knows instinctively the truth of that judgement. It is surprising how few others fully realize its significance, for it is what has always set the region and its people apart.

One further point needs briefly to be made. Dunedin is always at the centre of Olssen's story. Indeed at times, as in his excellent discussions of the emergence of class consciousness in the late nineteenth century, concentration on the metropolis is such that the hinterland fades completely from view. No doubt Olssen will be taken to task by irate readers in Ettrick or even Oamaru for this, yet it seems to me to be justified. Dunedin, even in decline, continues to dominate the province, and the pre-eminence that Olssen gives to the city in his book does reflect the facts of Otago's demography and its development.

In his preface, Olssen expresses the hope that all who read his work will recognize in it their 'own Otagos.' Though there are some odd omissions — he never mentions the racing industry for example, yet the success of Otago horses, trainers and jockeys at Trentham, Randwick and above all, Flemington, was always a source of pride, even for those whose closeness to the Kirk precluded a visit to Wingatui. There are some images one would like to have been reminded of — the fair-haired Bert

Sutcliffe scoring one of his elegant centuries on a sun-drenched Carisbrook pitch is mine. Nevertheless, 'my Otago' can certainly be found in Olssen's pages, and I thank him for that. More importantly, in this wise, witty and beautiful book we have a contribution not only to regional but to national history of the highest quality.

JOHN SALMOND

La Trobe University

Into a New Key. The Origins and History of the Music Federation of New Zealand Inc. 1950-82. By John Mansfield Thomson. The Music Federation of New Zealand Inc., Wellington, 1985. 192 pp., illus. N.Z. price \$19.95.

THE WORLD of music is accustomed to mark the passage of time by the celebration of centenaries, most frequently of births and deaths of composers. At first sight rather curiously, this book was commissioned in the 32nd year of the life of the Music Federation of New Zealand, and appeared in its 34th. It stands somewhat apart, too, as celebrating not the life and work of an individual, nor even the survival of a performing organization or venue, but that of a concert-promoting organization.

An anniversary can indeed be celebrated, as a reading of the early pages of this book suggests. It is just forty years since, towards the end of the European war, the Wellington Chamber Music Society held its first concert, and its success and its initiative had a great deal to do with the subsequent success of the national venture. Those who commissioned the book felt conscious of the passing of an era, with the death of Arthur Hilton, for so long a leading figure in the Federation. The later chapters of the book certainly show that his work was worth celebrating, whether the resulting book fell neatly into a time-frame or not.

Arthur Hilton was, as Thomson points out, one of those refugees from Nazified Europe who did so much to stimulate New Zealand's intellectual and cultural life. Another, fortunately still with us, was Fred Turnovsky, closely associated with the Federation and also, of course, with the New Zealand Opera. Not all the enterprise and energy were imported, however. Among the early enthusiasts was J. C. Beaglehole. The editors of the *New Zealand Journal of History* were to draw for their first number on his knowledge of typography. Its readers will find that the Wellington Chamber Music Society was just as wise: 'he would agonise over an ampersand', it was said (p.25). But he was also an eloquent critic, and, not surprisingly, a far from complaisant one.

There is indeed a risk that a commemorative book of this kind may become a chronicle of worthies. The risk is increased in this case, inasmuch as it has also to give an account of the artists the Federation employed and the programmes they gave, from the first meeting, when a quartet led by Vincent Aspey performed Dvořák and Haydn, to later ventures, like the visits of the Amadeus Quartet and Les Percussions de Strasbourg. The other main sources available do not entirely diminish the risk. There are reviews of concerts, the nearest the historian can perhaps get to recreating the experience the audience and the artists then shared, but still perhaps far from it. There are accounts of meetings, chiefly the more public ones, and of the speeches made at them.