

Thomson makes much of this live, and it will mean something even to those who are not devotees of the Federation. Arthur Hilton, as I can vouch from my recollections of him on the Arts Council, is well characterized: a man of stature and calibre, at times appearing an autocrat, even an intriguer. 'He did indeed bring a European concept of power to the Chamber Music Federation. He enjoyed holding all the cards in his hand, playing off one person against another, or one society against another. He was born and bred to it' (p.115). But if Thomson does justice to the European contribution to the venture, he might perhaps have done more to set it in its New Zealand context. 'A transplant that took' could be said of Hilton and Federation. But it was not merely because of the initiative of the migrants and of their colleagues in Wellington and other main and provincial centres. The story would have been more secured from the risks of a chronicle if the author had been able to take a fuller account of other factors. Some are indeed mentioned, the implications of few discussed. The invention of the LP disc, the improvements in air travel, the growth of state patronage: of these we hear, but much less of the development of the New Zealand community itself which more broadly determines the parameters within which an organization like the Federation must work.

It would perhaps be unfair, however, to blame Thomson for not tackling this task in the present volume. It is more the task of the larger work he is preparing on the history of musical performance and composition in New Zealand. To that historians will look forward with eager anticipation stimulated both by the present book and by Thomson's superb biography of Alfred Hill, *A Distant Music* (Auckland, 1980). But those who guide the Federation into the future will want it, too. The role of a pioneer is challenging. The next phase may be harder still: the task is less clear.

The Federation began with an emphasis on New Zealand artists and with enterprising programmes. From the early 1950s it arranged tours by major international groups. That brought New Zealand's musical life into direct contact with the standards and developments of musical life elsewhere. But, along with the increasing costs involved, it made it difficult to continue to use venues of suitable intimacy, and perhaps contributed to caution, if not timidity, in the selection of repertoire. The Federation's responsibility to New Zealand musicians was asserted in a number of ways, such as the institution of the Westpac School Music contests. Should there be others? Arguments about the future of the Federation should be a stimulus, not a discouragement to its activities. This sound history of the pioneers will be an encouragement to those who come after.

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Biography in New Zealand. Edited by Jock Phillips. Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press in association with the Stout Research Centre, Wellington, 1985. 105 pp. N.Z. price: \$14.95.

BIOGRAPHY IN NEW ZEALAND presents to a wider audience the papers and prepared commentaries that were first delivered in Wellington on 28/29 July 1984 at the

inaugural conference of the Stout Research Centre for the study of New Zealand society, history and culture. As Director Dr Jock Phillips explains in the introduction to this volume, the interdisciplinary objectives of the new institution were well served by the choice of biography as the theme for the first conference. 'Links with the intellectual community outside the university' were also well forged, given the joint hosting of the conference by those responsible for the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* sesquicentennial project.

Contributions from sixteen of the formal speakers are included in this book. Antony Alpers addresses with elegance and honesty some problems of the literary biographer; Keith Sinclair, Michael King and Erik Olssen reflect on their experiences of writing political biography. The life history approach is discussed at length by Charles Sedgwick and more briefly by Cheleen Mahar, Alison Gray and Sue Middleton. Shelagh Cox, Charlotte Macdonald, Anne Else and Ellen Ellis outline in a positive manner the range of difficulties associated with women's biography. The keynote address in which J. C. Davis questions the intellectual credibility of the biographical form has not passed unchallenged, especially by those whose cultural inheritance is not a Western one. Ruka Broughton and J. K. Pere draw on their current research into Maori leaders, Titokowaru and Wi Pere respectively, to demonstrate the variety of biographical method which might be adopted. Stephen O'Regan's quite superb essay, 'Maoris, Biographies and Dictionaries', should be compulsory reading for all who are in any way interested in understanding and interpreting the cultural diversity of New Zealand's past and present society. Overall the collection is evidence of a stimulating and highly successful conference.

Although Dr Phillips has provided in his introduction a useful summation of the main arguments of each paper, his editorial brief is narrow. Colin Davis's paper, for example, posed a very critical set of questions for which no answers were forthcoming. While some rejoinders are to be found in the subsequent essays, there is no indication of the wider response engendered during discussion sessions. Consequently, when this book is used — as was the case recently — as a reference tool for mature and well-qualified research students undertaking biographical studies, readers could emerge (as did the students) frustrated at what they perceived to be a disproportionate emphasis on difficulties.

Nor are readers 'wishing simply for sensible advice on how to set about writing biography' likely to receive much in the way of practical assistance in this volume, despite Dr Phillips's assertion to the contrary. With few exceptions, such advice on the actual writing up of a biographical study as is contained in the book focuses on the major work concerning a single individual. Such a preoccupation is disappointing in view of the DNZB's involvement, for the 500–1000 word essay will be the norm for writers for the *Dictionary*, as indeed it is for the vast majority of amateur biographers in this country.

In this respect it seems an unfortunate oversight that the most flourishing avenue of biographical research in New Zealand appears to have been ignored by conference organizers and contributors alike. Professional historians may prefer to downgrade the endeavours of that body of enthusiasts often described as 'granny-hunters', but the collective evidence which can be gleaned from genealogical research goes some distance towards providing a perspective on those 'ordinary' members of society whose records would not normally be considered worthy of preservation, let alone archival presentation. A November 1985 edition of a Waikato University Library bibliography, compiled by A. P. U. Millett, indicates that some six hundred family histories have been published in New Zealand in the last three decades. The quality

of research in many of these publications is meticulous, although the quality of writing and presentation is poor, but few genealogists will be encouraged to consult this volume for guidance. Need such a good opportunity have been lost? Perhaps the editor could have asked each contributor to nominate the three non-New Zealand biographies that he/she regarded most highly. Such a list would have been a useful starting point for writers of many different persuasions who share nevertheless an enthusiasm for the biographical form. And one final query: is it axiomatic that women biographers are feminists?

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Campus Beyond the Walls: The First 25 Years of Massey University's extramural programme. By J. M. R. Owens. Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1985. 133 pp. N.Z. Price \$12.95.

THIS SLIM, unassuming book documents the development of extramural studies at Massey from small beginnings in 1960 to a large-scale enterprise handling over 10,000 enrolments by 1984. The author, himself one of the original staff appointed in 1959, has made use of a variety of sources, documentary records, interviews, photographs, and written reminiscences from staff and students.

The first two chapters, detailing the background against which extramural teaching was established at Massey and the early struggles to survive and develop, are the most substantial. Owens describes graphically the problems posed in the middle decades of the century by 'exempted students', given the right to sit examinations without attending lectures. University opinion of this practice was almost totally condemnatory. Rankine Brown wrote in 1937: 'The existence of exempted students may be a necessary excrescence on a university nowadays, but many of us in New Zealand consider it to be an evil'. The 1925 Reichel-Tate Royal Commission on University Education had faced the issue, suggesting a compromise that was not followed for another 35 years, for lack of resources as well as negative entrenched opinion. Noting that, although exempted students might benefit from study they were not gaining 'a true university education', it made practical recommendations about replicating internal methods for externals as well as increasing facilities for full-time study.

The needs of external students, enrolled at all university colleges, were energetically pressed throughout the 1950s by the teacher organizations, and by the then Director of Education, Dr C. C. Beeby, concerned to supply more teachers with university training to staff schools hit by the baby boom. His presence on the Senate of the University of New Zealand was important. University staff, refused extra resources to cope with external enrolments, countered that teachers failed to understand the nature of university life.

It was in this unpromising climate that in 1960 Palmerston North University College opened for extramural enrolments. In a characteristically lucid introduction to the book Dr Beeby, looking back on the negotiations in which he had been so keenly involved, notes that 'what occurred was a combination of public pressure,