



'In the absence of a history of civilization', states the preface of the first-named CD, *Landscapes*, echoing the words of Douglas Lilburn and Jack Body; 'New Zealanders have formed a deep attachment to the land on which they live'.

Leaving aside the fact that many citizens of many countries may have formed a similar attachment to their countryside, it has made an excellent excuse for the presentation of an exciting disc of music whose composers are all speaking about some form of relationship with the land. From its most appropriate use and beautiful reproduction of paintings from the BNZ Art Collection throughout the CD booklet, to the intriguing collection of pieces and

composers in this set and the exemplary production of both music and notes on the works, its existence challenges the notion that there are only a handful of composers that everyone in the country may be pleased to hear.

Every fresh work presents a new aural fascination, from the clarity and sharp etching of the performance of the Lilburn (the *Drysdale Overture*), to the slow and powerful crescendo of Lyell Cresswell's *Dancing on a Volcano*; through the unfolding intensity of Ross Harris's... *of Memory*... and David Hamilton's soulfully pleasant *Elysian Fields*, to the thoughtful gentleness of Martin Lodge's *Hinterland* and the chirruping life of Anthony Ritchie's *Yet another Poem of Spring*.

Yet if I had to choose a single work to mention, it would have to be Maria Grenfell's beautiful *Stealing Tutunui*. Based on a Maori myth, as so many of our composers' works now are, it is the christening tale of chief Tinirau's son, and about the stealing thereafter and feasting on Tinirau's pet whale, and the dreadful retribution wrought on the perpetrator. The work is lively and full of interest, its bubbling and dancing rhythms subtly altering as the denouement draws closer. The slow bass rollings of the sea, the lively patternings of the waves, the beauty of the orchestrations, in all this there is never a dull moment in a work satisfyingly full of imagination.

Most works are from the last three years, though the Cresswell is from 1996 and of course the Lilburn was written in 1937. This must be its definitive performance though. All these composers are so lucky to have their works very lovingly realised by conductor Kenneth Young, and so well and faithfully played by a committed NZSO. This disc, well chosen, beautifully executed, and full of interest is one which cries out 'Buy me!'.