

MAJOR CONCERT - FRIDAY 27 APRIL AT 8PM

The Nelson Symphony Orchestra conducted by Miranda Adams with renowned guest pianist David Guerin and guest narrator Alex Gilchrist.

This Symphony Orchestra Concert promises to be a most exciting event. The programme will be

- Mendelssohn - Overture, "The Hebrides" OP26 (Fingal's Cave)
Lilburn - Landfall in Unknown Seas
Guest narrator Alex Gilchrist
Keay - Diffractions for Piano and Orchestra
Guest soloist David Guerin
Schubert - Symphony No.3 in D major, D200

The two New Zealand works are fascinating on many levels -

DIFFRACTIONS

for Piano and Orchestra - Nigel Keay

Diffraction - break up (beam of light) into series of dark and light bands or coloured spectra, or (beam of radiation or particles) into a series of alternatively high or low intensities.

Diffractions for Piano and Orchestra: an analogue in sound: the piano, central and prominent, exploiting an aspect of its technique to which it is ideally suited - rapid changes of direction/wide intervallic leaps: alternating high and low intensities. The orchestra: bands of coloured spectra forming an integrated texture. Melody as oscillations of colour: sometimes pointillistic other times longer fragments.

Diffractions: essentially an abstract work in one continuous movement.

Diffractions was commissioned by the Dunedin Sinfonia with assistance from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand in December 1986, and was given its premiere performance by that orchestra on September 13th 1987. It was also performed at the 1987 Sonic Circus (October 31) by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra with David Guerin as soloist.

One of New Zealand's leading pianists, David Guerin was born in Wellington and educated at Victoria University, the University of Auckland (where he graduated with an M.Mus degree) and the Musikhochschule in Cologne, West Germany. His teachers included Judith Clark, Janetta McStay, Aloys Kontarsky, Wilhelm Hecker and members of the Amadeus Quartet.

Now living in Raunui, he divides his time between the Gold Coast and Auckland. He performs as a soloist, chamber music player and accompanist, appearing regularly with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra (including recent performances of the Gershwin Concerto, Rachmaninov II, and Oiseaux Exotiques by Messiaen), and with the NZSO. David tours New Zealand giving concerts for the NZ Music Federation and local music societies, and also records for Radio NZ.

A highly versatile musician, he has been involved with ballet, stage, opera and film music, and also has many pupils. A strong commitment to the performance of music by New Zealanders has been a feature of his career, and several composers have written pieces especially for hire including Noel Sanders and Philip Dadson. He has been associated in concert with some of New Zealand's finest musicians including Marya Martin, Wendy Dixon, Peter Scholes, Ingrid Wahlberg, Wilma Smith and the Auckland String Quartet.

Nigel Keay is a Nelson-based New Zealand composer with a performing background as a violist. His output consists mainly of chamber and orchestral works. Nigel Keay has been a Mozart Fellow (composer-in-residence) at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand (1986/1987) and Composer-in-Residence at the Nelson School of Music.

LANDFALL IN UNKNOWN SEAS

On 13 December 1642, the Dutch navigator, Abel Tasman, sailing in the southern seas, sighted "a great land uplifted high". It was the west coast of the South Island of New Zealand. While reconnoitring a "beautiful and safe bay" one of Tasman's ship's boats was attacked by a canoe of Maoris and three of the Dutch sailors were killed. The "safe bay" thus became known as Murderers' Bay. Tasman sailed up the coast but, fearful of further attacks and plagued by ill winds and bad weather, never set foot on New Zealand. On 6 January 1643, he sailed away north and, as Dr. JC Beaglehole writes in his *Discovery of New Zealand*, "darkness fell once more on the lonely islands in the southern ocean with their breaking white surf, their mountains and the passionate rough-voiced men."

It was Dr. JC Beaglehole who, on behalf of the National Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, invited Allen Curnow to write a poem for the tercentennial commemoration of Tasman's discovery of New Zealand. Mr Curnow read the historical records of the voyage and of the history of Dutch and Portuguese navigation in the 17th century "more with the idea" as he says, "of keeping history out of the poem than of cramming it in."

"If the poem was to be worthwhile," says the poet, "it needed a world perspective, to be true for all discoveries, while honouring this one in particular: true also for our modern New Zealand while honouring the past. I thought of it in three 'movements.' First, a kind of recitative, setting the historical scene, and the setting-forth of the voyagers into the unknown - likening them too, to the ancient Polynesian voyagers. Second, a dramatic lyric, in rapid, short metre and strict pattern, recounting the Landfall in New Zealand, the bloody clash with the islanders, and Tasman's departure. Third, a lyric meditation, harmonising the vision and action of the first two parts, and offering a possible meaning for the whole to our own age and nation.

"Before the year was out, Douglas Lilburn - whose understanding of my purposes and feelings in the poem was, I realize, one of those rare and happy circumstances between composer and author - had read the poem and written his incidental music for strings. The collaborated work has been performed and broadcast many times since the tercentennial of 1942.

Douglas Lilburn, born 1915, has written a wide range of compositions including three symphonies and a good deal of incidental music, of which *Landfall in Unknown Seas* is an early example.

Alex Gilchrist the narrator with the orchestra is well known in New Zealand Professional Performing Arts circles. The founder director of the Fortune Theatre Dunedin, also Associate Artistic Director of the Court Theatre for many years. Alex's professional career began as a classical dancer with the renowned Borovansky Ballet Co. moving over the years through many musical comedies with JC Williamson's and into the 'legitimate theatre'. At present he is based in Nelson at the School of Music working in both an artistic and administrative capacity.