

'Art' music gets an airing

Works by young New Zealand composers will take centre stage in a special 1990 concert of New Zealand Art Music on Sunday.

For those a little daunted by the avant-garde nature of some works, there will be an introduction to each of the nine composers' pieces.

Nigel Keay, the Nelson School of Music's former composer-in-residence who co-ordinated the concert's programme, said most of the works were written in the last five years.

"And we have gone for the younger composers as compared with the older established composers."

He said art music had a more serious intent, written specifically for concert situations, as against folk and lighter music, which was more commercial.

While the number of working composers was healthy, many people knew little of NZ art music because it was not often heard, said Nigel Keay.

Orchestras such as the NZSO and Auckland Philharmonia had backlogs of New Zealand music yet to be performed.

It was a similar situation to New Zealand recording artists calling for more coverage of their industry, he said.

While Sunday's concert is formal, each piece will be introduced to make the music more approachable.

The most well-known composer in the line-up is former New Zealander Lyell Cresswell, who now lives in England.

His work has been specifically written for 1990, while other works chosen show the state of New Zealand music at the moment.

Other composers include Auckland University lecturer John Elmsly, whose work will be performed by the Nelson Wind Quintet with electronic support.

There will be works by Nigel Keay himself, Helen Bowater of Welling-

ton, another Auckland University lecturer John Rimmer, local saxophonist Bryan James and Wellington composer Mark Langford.

Wellington composer-in-schools Helen Fisher's work will be performed by the Polyhymnos Choir, and Victoria University lecturer Ross Harris' work is totally electronic.

Performing artists include Miranda Adams, Virginia Ward-Brown, Valerie Towse, Joanne Hodgson, Bryan James, Polyhymnos and the Nelson Wind Quintet.

Nigel Keay said while the School of Music was very supportive of New Zealand music, Sunday's concert was a rare chance to hear a concentration of home-grown fare.

"Certainly I find that it's the best way of hearing it so you can tune in on the idiom," he said.

The New Zealand Art Music Concert starts at 2pm at the Nelson School of Music.