

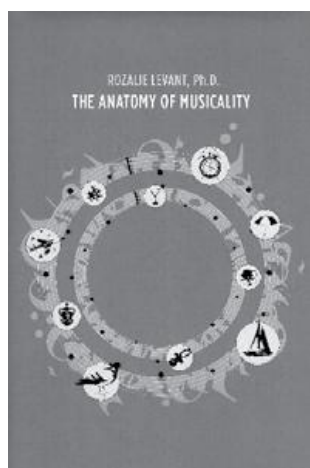
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## Book Reviews

### *The Anatomy of Musicality* by Rozalie Levant, PhD

Published by Rozalie Levant, 2006. ISBN:  
13:978-0-9785746-0-4,  
ISBN 10: 0-9-9785746-0-5

Reviewed by Jocelyn Donaldson



Dr Levant, pianist and musicologist, introduces the reader to the three ingredients of musicality: analysis of the music content; the need to express the content and emotion of the music; a sense of good taste. These ingredients are looked at from physical, mental and emotional perspectives.

A fresh approach to performance and teaching is presented by taking a holistic approach to a composition; isolating its various parts by careful examination, diagnosing problems and stimulating the imagination and artistry of the performer.

This book is primarily for pianists, music teachers and students. Obstacles and difficulties of piano playing can be overcome through her practical ways. After careful analysis of the score and an understanding of the printed matter, a composition can be taken apart so that within each phrase the inner energy is sought, crescendo/decrescendo is created in variously defined ways and dynamics are reduced to micro-dynamics.

Ways of overcoming tension, the fingering of difficult passages and achieving a legato using mental images and games are clearly explained and illustrated. The performer's

mind is opened to the scope of creative interpretation.

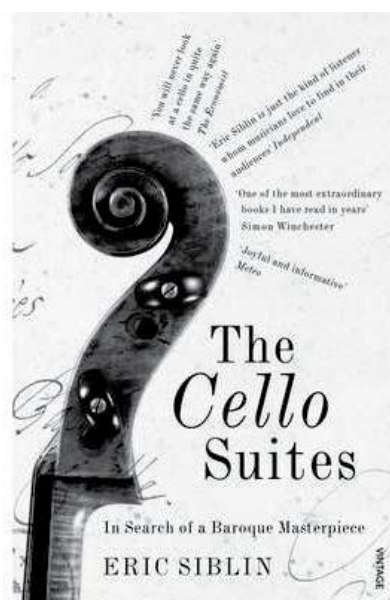
This book has practical ideas, imaginative diagrams, inspiration and humour.

*Jocelyn Donaldson is a private piano teacher in Winton and Te Anau. She is a member of the IRMTNZ Southland Branch and represents Region 5 on the IRMTNZ Council.*

### *The Cello Suites: In Search of a Baroque Masterpiece* Eric Siblin, Allen & Unwin

Published by Vintage, 2011. ISBN-10:  
0099546787 ISBN-13: 9780099546788

Reviewed by Lisa Williamson



The Cello Suites is the story of three individual men – composer J S Bach, cellist Pablo Casals, and rock music critic Eric Siblin – woven into a single book. It is divided into six sections, each corresponding to the six suites, and each section is divided into chapters titled with the individual movements of the suites.

After a short explanation as to how he came to be at a cello recital, Siblin takes us back to 1685, the year of Bach's birth. Bach's life story is told in rich detail; we learn that he wasn't always a saintly man (he was apparently scolded by authorities in Armstadt for unseemly behaviour with a woman in a church loft), why the Goldberg Variations were written and the reason for their title, and the sadness

of his death as he desperately tried to finish the Art of the Fugue.

Siblin also traces the mystery surrounding Bach's original score of the suites, and explores the possibility that they were written for the violoncello piccolo – a violin-sized instrument tuned like a cello which was held horizontally slung from a strap over the shoulder.

Parallel to the story of Bach's life is that of Pablo Casals, the cellist responsible for transforming the suites from mere technical exercises to works worthy of the concert platform. We learn of his early life in Spain and how, as a staunch supporter of Catalan independence, his politics affected his career. Through meticulous research and assured writing Siblin presents us with the complete Casals, not just the cellist. He also credits Casals with reinventing the cello and placing it firmly on the podium as an instrument worthy of solo recitals.

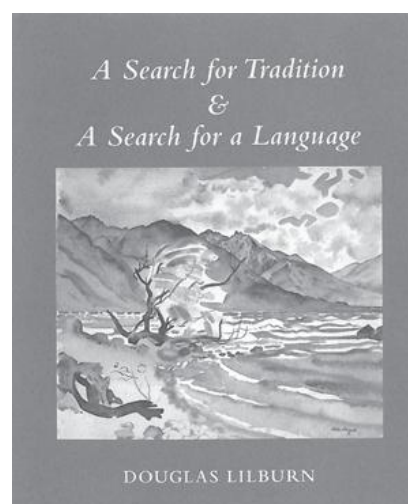
The third strand in this book is Siblin's own story of his journey from rock and pop to classical music, and how Bach's music and the Cello Suites in particular came to be such a big part of his life.

*Lisa Williamson grew up in Hamilton, studying piano with Josie Fluhler and (as an adult) harp with Delphine McAneney and Rebecca Harris. Lisa teaches harp, piano and theory and has been actively involved with IRMTNZ as a committee member and President of the Waikato Branch.*

## *A Search for Tradition & A Search for a Language* by Douglas Lilburn

Published by the Lilburn Trust in association with Victoria University Press, 2001. ISBN: 978-0-473-18379-0

Reviewed by Dianne James



**“I want to plead with you the necessity of having a music of our own, a living tradition of music created in this country, a music that will satisfy those parts of our being that cannot be satisfied by the music of other nations.”**

So wrote Douglas Lilburn in the seminal talk he gave at the first Cambridge Music School in 1946. This talk, subsequently published with the title, *A Search for Tradition*, explored the difficulties faced by creative artists working in a small, isolated, remote country, in the process outlining some of the liabilities and assets we have in being New Zealanders, as well as his ideas on the place of music in our identity. A second talk, entitled *A Search for Language*, was presented at the University of Otago 22 years later, in 1969. As the title suggests, the difficulty of finding one's voice, of finding a musical language that might reflect one's human experience, emerged as the greatest hurdle confronting the composer growing and developing in New Zealand.

Lilburn's two talks have been brought together for the first time in a beautiful little book produced and published by the Lilburn Residence Trust. It includes the prefaces that music historian J.M. Thomson wrote for their first publication as separate booklets in the

mid-1980s, as well as an afterword by one of today's leading composers, Jack Body.

Interleaved throughout are reproductions of watercolours and sketches by Rita Angus, a selection of photographs, as well as beautifully printed facsimiles of a few of Lilburn's autograph manuscripts. Appendices include a timeline of Lilburn's life, and lists of available scores and recordings of Lilburn's music.

The issues Lilburn explores in the first of these talks are wide-ranging, from the political and economic dependence New Zealand had on older countries, to the limitations on creativity and personal expression, which resulted from the almost exclusive focus on traditional harmony and counterpoint existing in New Zealand universities at the time. He laments the lack of a tradition of folk music that might have been a source of rhythmic or melodic ideas for emerging New Zealand born and bred composers, and the lack of a tradition of serious music written here. Lilburn's belief, that the proper concern of art is humanity, emerges early on in this address, and he suggests that it is our environment which is slowly but inevitably shaping us into characteristic ways of living, developing in us those qualities that make us different from the English or the Americans.

He believes that rhythm, in its broadest possible sense – “the patterns of our landscape and seacoasts, the changing of our seasons, and the flow of light and colour about us” – is the link between “ourselves, and the discovery of that music which will be an expression of ourselves”.

The relationship between musical language and experience emerges as the fundamental theme of Lilburn's 1969 lecture, and he suggests that while a composer might strive to simulate the experience and techniques of master composers he must in the end be true to himself and his own individual experiences.

As Lilburn concludes, “In preferring to search the pleasant or unpalatable truths of his own experience, I think he has the best chance of discovering the sources of his creativity, whatever larger thing may give validity to his choice of a language.”

The passage of time has not dimmed the relevance of Lilburn's words; these talks are in fact essential reading for anyone interested in New Zealand music and culture. This elegant volume deserves a place in every music teacher's library. Very highly recommended.

**Dianne James** is a member of the IRMTNZ Council and the Auckland Branch Committee. She has an interest in 18<sup>th</sup> Century music, especially that of Haydn, and has presented seminars to both Auckland and Wellington Branches on teaching his music. Dianne contributes regularly to feature programmes on Radio NZ Concert.