

made evident in Adrienne Simpson's book. Not many of the companies who toured to New Zealand made much money, even though houses were good. The costs of transport over the distances involved were high, the risks were great, and the profits were to be made not here but in Australia. After World War 1, touring largely fell away for these financial reasons. It is a familiar story, and as the history is traced up to more recent times we are reminded of the difficulties experienced by the New Zealand Opera Company.

If there is a message to be gleaned from the book it may be this. The successful opera companies had, first of all, excellent, experienced and knowledgeable management, capable of making both artistic and financial decisions. Lyster, the Simonsens and the others were all opera people, not managers brought in from outside, but at the same time they had administrative and people skills. Secondly, the companies provided a mix of works, but made their selections according to audience taste. They learned what their audiences would accept. Attempts to provide audiences with what was good for them always led to financial disaster. Lastly, they quite properly relied on audiences to be able to recognise high quality. It might be the quality of a work, or the quality of a performer – either would fill the house, but the latter was more reliable in this respect! The performer need not be particularly well-known before his or first performance in a town, but if the word would get around that he or she was worth hearing, tickets would sell like hot cakes.

Adrienne Simpson's book is,

despite its wealth of detail, eminently readable. We may occasionally be tempted to skip the finer points of who did what when – except, of course, when it's our town she is talking about! – but anyone with an

interest in opera in New Zealand will find this an entertaining and informative volume. We look forward to more: perhaps a book on the amateur scene, or on the operas written by New Zealanders. ☞

📖 BOOK REVIEW

by Tony Nightingale

A vigorous fermentation

Quality Bakers of New Zealand: The First 25 Years

Susan Butterworth, Quality Bakers NZ Ltd, 1997, \$49.95, 265 pp.

TO A CHILD IN THE 1960s, bread was brown or white (or grey), and if you were prepared to pay a little more, you could purchase the mysterious 'milk loaf'. Bread was cheap; nutritious, and its consumption was considered such a virtue, that it was subsidised.... Bread was also excruciatingly boring! What ever happened to those days and how did we get to the stage today where New Zealand is a world leader in bread production? Susan Butterworth's lively history *Quality Bakers: The First 25 Years* will certainly help you start to pick away at the crust of this culinary question.

This is a story of a revolution in breadmaking, from production by small groups of artisans to industrial organisation on a scale which made the New Zealand industry a model for other countries. The smaller provincial bakers of central New Zealand banded together into a cooperative that included, amongst others, Ted Debrency of Wellington's Magnet bakeries, Noel Yarrow of A.H. Yarrow Ltd, Manaia, and Pat Goodman of GBH bakeries Nelson. It was no coincidence that these companies were all in the WNTV1

(you have to be over 30 to remember that) reception area, because the cooperative quickly developed distinctive branding and a coherent marketing strategy for their products, based on TV advertising. It grew, took on the bigger bakeries, and guided by Sir Pat Goodman and his team's entrepreneurial skills, developed commercial procedures that worked. As part of this process the cooperative became a company.

Susan Butterworth is aware of much of the theory that has been used and abused to explain the growth of multinational enterprises, but she has chosen to concentrate on a broad range of themes that allow the readers to judge for themselves what made Quality Bakers so successful. Given the lack of agreement amongst theorists on what makes a successful company, and the uncomfortable fact that much of the initial development took place under a highly regulated market, this is sensible. It also makes a much better read where chapter headings such as 'Mixing the Dough' and 'Vigorous Fermentation' give tongue-in-cheek insights into quite complex developments.

The narrative develops into a logical and reasonable focus on management, which seriously examines commercial strategies, risk control and the company's successes and failures with vertical integration into flour milling and yeast production. At one point there is an account of the move into A.S. Paterson and the rise of Peter Shirtliffe. Susan Butterworth also incorporates individual perspectives on what was a lively and cut-throat 1980s corporate culture.

There is tension in this history between the development of Quality Bakers as a leading New Zealand company and the formation of Goodman Fielder, which the author softens by focusing on the baking trade. This is a history of Quality Bakers and therefore quite reasonable, but at another level it is frustrating, because many of the expansions were financed by the cash-rich baking industry.

One is also drawn to the conclusion that the initial cooperative stage was important in the transition from craft to major corporate. In this sense there are parallels with the development last century of Rockefeller's Standard Oil.

This book also tells a story of deregulation. Baking was one of New Zealand's most tightly controlled industries, where most inputs (particularly flour and yeast) were restricted, prices were set and the baker's profitability was restrained. Changes to management were often a response to increasing deregulation which began in the early 1970s but saw the removal of price control in 1981 and from 1983 the beginning of the end of the Wheat Board's

monopoly of wheat production. The gradual and successful withdrawal of government from the market place took 20 years and was in marked contrast with the instantaneous restructuring of recent years.

This is an intelligent, groundbreaking and readable work. In a New Zealand that congratulates itself on its latter day commercial develop-

ment, it is frustrating that there is not more such history commissioned. It is, however, perplexing that the superb marketing organisation that is Quality Bakers could not better promote itself – this book is hard to get hold of.

This is a fine story and Quality Bakers should be using it to proclaim their success to the world. ☞

☞ BOOK REVIEW

by John M. Thomson

Cross rhythms

A Song and Dance

David Farquhar, Massey University Composer Address, 1997, \$5.

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP of Robert Hoskins, the Music Department of Massey University has not only begun publishing scores by New Zealand composers, but also instituted an annual series of Composer Addresses which are elegantly printed as a pamphlet. So far three composers have been honoured in this way, Edwin Carr, John Ritchie and now David Farquhar, Emeritus Professor of the School of Music at Victoria University of Wellington. Robert Hoskins has provided a platform hitherto lacking, for such an ongoing personal declaration of composerly influences and aspirations, to touch on only two aspects of the series. The latest address by David Farquhar, who recently celebrated his 70th birthday, begins with his experiences at St Peter's School, Cambridge, where the founding headmaster Arthur Broadhurst 'was music-mad: the curriculum involved singing and music-theory, and all pupils learned an instrument. Every day involved

music-making and there were annual performance competitions; by the time I left the school I was playing piano, cello and organ and singing in choirs'. He began composing at the age of eleven – 'Once bitten by the composing bug, I couldn't stop'. Farquhar discusses aspects of performance and his own attraction to song: 'I find that words provide an inspiration and also a pull between their demands and the demands of my musical ideas'. He describes the way in which he is drawn to cross-rhythms in dance: 'Once involved we can experience those musical emotions that various writers are tempted to describe, but which remain nevertheless mysterious. Music is fortunately beyond words'. Each Address includes a perceptive appreciation of the composer's style by Hoskins. ☞

A Song and a Dance is available from Robert Hoskins, Music Department, Massey University, PO Box 11222, Palmerston North.