



The birds began to sing

A memoir of a New Zealand composer

Dorothy Buchanan

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SELLING POINTS

- one of New Zealand's most prominent composers – a force in music and music-making in Aotearoa for over half a century
- worked with leading writers like Witi Ihimaera, Margaret Mahy, Lauris Edmond and Fleur Adcock
- New Zealand's first composer-in-schools with hundreds of students inspired by her unconventional approach

Dorothy Buchanan is a prolific, much loved and much awarded composer, who pioneered the composer-in-schools scheme and has been a force in music and music-making in Aotearoa for over half a century.



Born in 1945 on the West Coast, she grew up as one of six sisters in a musical family in Christchurch. Dotty, as she's known, graduated with a MusB (Hons) in composition and worked as a freelance composer, pianist, violinist and teacher, with students relishing her unconventional approach to music education. She went on to become a musical director, adjudicator and QEII Arts Council assessor and co-founded the publishing co-operative Nota Bene.

Her hundreds of compositions include collaborations with writers Witi Ihimaera, Margaret Mahy, Lauris Edmond and Fleur Adcock, and her awards include a CANZ Outstanding Achievement Award, a Suffrage Medal, and the ONZM. In the 1990's Dorothy was part of the artistic directorate for three Composing Women's festivals that showcased classical, rock, jazz, Māori and Pasifika music, and her own compositions.

Dorothy Buchanan's story is told with her trademark modesty and humour and rings with her lifelong passion for music. In her seventies, she lives in Eastbourne with her husband, David.



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