

Various reports, memos, notes and articles document some of his activities as a university teacher and composer, the latter including the business of publishing, recording, signing contracts and preserving New Zealand composers' works.

Douglas Lilburn has kept an amazing number of letters. These date from around 1935 to the present, and there are still 'three trunkloads to come'. The first package of letters to come were those of Vaughan Williams, who expresses his hope that Douglas will continue composing. The reason for this concern is found in a letter dated 5 September 1941 from Vaughan Williams to Frederick Page, another of his students, where he writes, 'Give my love to Lilburne [sic] — and tell him he must try & combine farming and music'.⁷ The previous year Douglas had returned to New Zealand and was working on his sister's sheep farm in Taihape while her husband was at war. Copies of the Vaughan Williams letters have been deposited in the British Library; unfortunately, Vaughan Williams did not keep Lilburn's letters.

The next deposit of correspondence, consisting of greetings cards, letters and postcards, came in bulk — 1.5 metres of it, sorted into brown envelopes. As it includes letters from writers, poets, artists, musicians, playwrights, arts organisations, educators, administrators, students, publishers, composer organisations, broadcasting bodies, and, according to Douglas, 'officials and mandarins', it is a cultural goldmine.

Correspondents include conductor Leon de Mauny, pianists Tessa Birnie and Ernest Empson, composers Aaron Copland, Alfred Hill and Denis Smalley, German guitarist Siegfried Behrend, poets Ruth Dallas and Charles Brasch, writer Ngaio Marsh and organisations ranging from Amnesty International to the Wellington City Council.

There are letters of appreciation, greetings on special occasions, and even a terse note from an irate neighbour in London complaining about Douglas incessantly practising his piano exercises.⁸ Letters often enclose articles, newscuttings, programmes and unpublished poems. A lively correspondence passed between Denis Glover and Douglas Lilburn, particularly on *Sings Harry* and on poetry. A simple mention by Glover concerning the view from his flat⁹ brought forth the following from Douglas:

22 Ascot Terrace
Wellington 1
14 May 1980

Dear Denis,

A cheer from your pumpkineer. If I waken at 3am I remember that Ghandi [sic] used to be up at that hour to recite the old prayers, and so I mumble my own. If it happens to be 4am or later, I'll think of you watching for Tapuaenuku.

But I'm alarmed to hear that dawn 'infiltrates' your early morning consciousness,