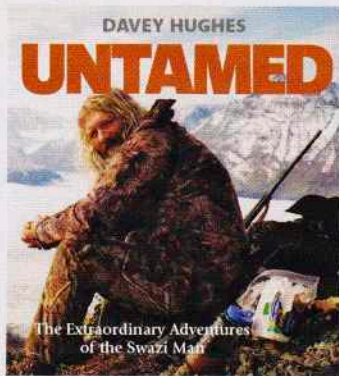


New Zealand Books *BY PAUL LITTLE*

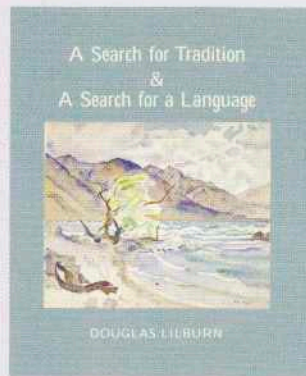


Untamed: The Extraordinary Adventures of the Swazi Man
Davey Hughes
 (Longacre Press, \$39.99)

Davey Hughes epitomises what marketers call “living your brand”. The wildman hunter produces clothing for wild men who go hunting. That it can also be bought by those who just like the look of it is a happy accident.

This ramble through his life and items – and he does ramble when he gets onto his ideas about what’s wrong with New Zealand today – is a thoroughly enjoyable account. Of Scottish extraction, Hughes was born in 1960, a product of Wainuiomata in its nappy valley heyday.

Like many successful entrepreneurs, he was obviously smart but didn’t suit school. Nothing later in the book – whether in Alaska or Africa – is as extraordinary as the tale of how, at the age of 14, he and



his mate went into a bank to get some money for a hunting trip – carrying their guns. No one turned a hair. While still a teenager, he headed to Europe, challenged himself and learnt a bit about life. Much of this is standard OE until he ends up under house arrest in South Africa, still not 20. I suspect Hughes frequently plays dumb so as not to dent the wild-man armour. The admission that in 1992 he was “doing some branding and corporate image work” is incongruous in context. With the assistance of ghost writer Justin Brown, the story has been delivered efficiently and in good time for Father’s Day.

A Search for Tradition & a Search for a Language

Douglas Lilburn
 (Lilburn Residence Trust in association with Victoria University Press, \$24.99)

This short book contains two lectures on the position of the

composer in New Zealand society, the first delivered at the Cambridge Summer School of Music in 1946, the second at the University of Otago in 1969.

Both advance ideas about nationalism and culture that, as Lilburn acknowledges, writers and painters had started to sort out in the 1930s. In 1946 he could say, “We are not really New Zealanders at all... we are only in the process of becoming.”

And that is why, he tells his audience, we should not expect a New Zealand composer to produce anything as great as a Bach mass. Yet, they will produce “something of more consequence and value to ourselves as a people than can be found in much of the overseas music we listen to”.

You might expect these pages to be imbued with the sort of imperiousness to which Lilburn’s peer and sometime collaborator Allen Curnow was prone. Not a bit of it. Lilburn’s warm humanism is apparent – “the proper concern of art is humanity” is his credo.

The voice here is that of the questing artist, with more questions than answers. But what interesting questions they are.

Special praise is due to the book’s elegant design. A slight volume, it achieves great impact without the Technicolor hysteria of many contemporary books that aim to create a strong visual impression.

Bill Manhire’s witty assessment is spot on: “He shows us not only how to stand upright, but also how to dance around a little.”

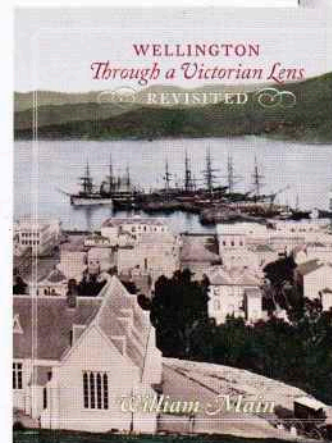
Revision

Reissued classics, overlooked masterpieces and inexplicable oddities.

Wellington through a Victorian Lens Revisited

William Main
 (Steele Roberts, \$39.99)

Recent events in Christchurch have served to remind us of the fragility of our precious built heritage. This reissue of William Main’s 1972 classic, with many new photos included, reminds us how little of that heritage we have preserved even in the capital. But there is more to admire here than handsome old buildings. The domestic interiors, studio portraits, crowd scenes, landscapes, and pioneering aerial photography from the 1920s (“Victorian” is very broadly defined) open a wonderful window on the past. Main has repeated only a third of the photos from the earlier edition. Instead, he has sought far and wide for unfamiliar images and his efforts have paid off handsomely.



At the age of 14, he and his mate went into a bank to get some money for a hunting trip – carrying their guns. No one turned a hair.