

## New Zealand music registered for copyright 1879-1900

ELIZABETH F. NICHOL

For over one hundred years New Zealand law has required copies of published material to be deposited at the General Assembly Library. The resultant collection is an invaluable record of New Zealand's imprint, and through it a record of changes and developments in the country's cultural identity. Early published material is one of our strongest remaining links to the period following European settlement, and through it we can observe various developments in artistic style, method and subject as well as a growing sense of national identity and confidence.

As in many countries, New Zealand's legal deposit requirements are associated with copyright protection. While not a prerequisite for copyright protection, present legal deposit legislation is part of the Copyright Act 1962, amended 1971. Similarly the first legal deposit provisions were included in the Fine Arts Copyright Act 1877 Amendment Act, 1879. The Act was passed to broaden the provisions of the Fine Arts Copyright Act 1877 which enabled copyright for paintings, drawings, engravings, photographs and ornamental designs. The 1879 Act widened the scope to include dramatic works, where 'dramatic work' was defined (section 2) as 'every tragedy, comedy, play, opera, farce or other scenic, musical or dramatic entertainment'.

The amending Bill was introduced to the House of Representatives by the Hon. John Sheehan, Minister of Justice, and passed through both Houses with little discussion. Hansard records only one speech, given when introducing the Bill for its second reading:

Mr Sheehan, in moving the second reading of this Bill, might state that at present, in this colony, if a man stole another's money or goods, he could be sent to prison, but there was no punishment for the man who stole another's brains. The Bill only proposed to give dramatic authors in the colony the same protection which they had at Home, and to prevent the products of their brains being stolen, or used by other persons without payment.<sup>1</sup>

However, there was an amendment made by the Legislative Assembly that was to have great importance. Added to the Bill was the provision that a copy of each dramatic work registered under