

# 1877 Hill & Son Grand Organ is pride of Barossa

Four hundred people packed the Tanunda Soldiers' Memorial Hall to witness a proud moment in Barossa's history.

A rousing rendition of Bach's Toccata and Fugue launched the first public performance of the Hill & Son Grand Organ which was rescued from the Adelaide Town Hall, re-located and meticulously restored through an epic effort by volunteers.

And no-one was more excited than Gawler's Mr Steve Kaesler, director of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia, who has been an integral part of the restoration project which has spanned more than 15 years.

He said Saturday's opening concert was fitting for the circa 1877 instrument which now sounds as it was originally intended when first built.

"This restoration project by the Organ Historical Trust

of Australia has proven to be most successful," he said.

"The organ looked splendid in its Victorian period finery, highlighted by special lighting put in place by the Faith Lutheran College students."

Special guest organist, Mr Dominic Perissinotto from Western Australia thrilled the audience with works by Vierne, Batiste and quirky variations on 'America', better known as God Save the Queen, by Charles Ives in a programme which included much variety from a broad range of countries.

"Dominic Perissinotto was at home on the organ, drawing a wide range of sounds from the palette of colours available on the 37 stops. The registrations from soft to loud were clear and effective," said Steve.

"The clarity of the instrument was showcased well, with voluptuous diapasons, gritty reeds and crystalline mixtures.

"Mixed with the stunning visual effect of the case, the overall sense of the instrument was most impressive and memorable. The instrument was warm and inviting and called us to come back at another time!"

A specially commissioned work by Tanunda-born composer, Natalie Williams held the enthusiastic audience in awe.

"Her composition 'Imprimatur' is a Toccata for Grand Organ written to showcase the capabilities of a large organ, it encompasses the wide range and scope of colours available," said Steve.

Adding another dimension to the evening was guest soprano, Kirsti Harms of Tanunda, whose Bach, Handel and Vavilov pieces were perfectly described as "mellifluous" by prominent Adelaide-based reviewer, Mr Stephen Whittington.

Mr Whittington's review continued, "...the brass-playing tradition of the Barossa was represented by a quintet led with distinction by trumpeter Stuart Jones. Timothy Sexton was the genial and witty host of the occasion, recounting between musical items the heroic and improbable story of the organ's rescue and eventual phoenix-like return," he wrote.

A second concert on Sunday was attended by 380 people and it is expected a third concert in the series celebrating the Hill & Son Grand Organ will also attract capacity crowds.

"Bach to the Future" will feature Brisbane's Christopher Wrench and Steve said tickets for next Sunday afternoon's concert are selling fast, "It's sure to be a snug fit!" he said.

Contact Margaret Georg on 8563 3199 for more information.



Organ Historical Trust of Australia's Steve Kaesler, director; John Maidment, chairman and David Shield, director with special guest organist, Dominic Perissinotto in front of the Hill & Son Grand Organ.

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