

## FESTIVAL HAD GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS AND MANY DISCOVERIES

As the Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields Festival reached its sparkling conclusion on Sunday night at St. Patrick's Cathedral it is worthwhile reflecting on its great musical achievements.

Vocal concerts were of the highest calibre with the Newman College Choir setting a high standard on the opening night. The Buxtehude Consort delivered an outstanding performance of Gesualdo's "Tenebrae Responsoria". Sally- Anne Russell's art song program was faultless in content and execution with accompanist Lucy Wang an equal and sympathetic partner.

Familiarity and discovery were two contrasting characteristics of this festival. The chamber group Trio Anima Mundi gave us a mature and elegant Mozart piano trio perhaps overshadowed by the discovery of William Hurlstone's highly romantic G major trio. The dramatic and lyrical elements came through with poise while seamless ensemble work and fine solos made the performance complete.

Other discoveries include the polished presentation of trombonist Joseph Yu and organist Jennifer Chou. This unusual combination worked brilliantly particularly with the baroque works. The concert featuring pianist Anthony Halliday and mallet percussionists 'Invention in Time' brought some unusual sound textures with original works and arrangements.

The three guest musicians from Italy were outstanding. Guitarist Massimo Scattolin, flautist Roberto Fabbriani and harpsichordist Michele Benuzzi performed in a variety of combinations with virtuosic skill. Michele Benuzzi's recital of baroque works displayed an intelligent understanding of the style and flawless technique. In the closing concert the former two musicians were joined by violist Helen Ireland and 'cellist Josephine Vains in an all-Schubert program with the great Arpeggione Sonata as the centrepiece. The four performers played the final piece, the quartet D. 96, with precise teamwork and energy closing the festival with another discovery composition for much of the audience.

Bronislaw Sozanski in The Ballarat Courier 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2010