

Eighteenth Century Sound

Informality ruled at Hammers and Horsehair - the second of Tauranga Musica's concerts at Tauranga Park Auditorium on Sunday afternoon.

The event had no clear beginning. Instead, the large audience found performers already playing amongst candelabra and leather couches in an eighteenth century drawing room.

First up was Douglas Mews on Fortepiano, successor to the plucked-string harpsichord and imported to Wellington in the 1840's. It was still a quiet instrument, and when joined by Robert Hall on a mature 'cello the two skilled musicians had to work to find balance.

Yet the program they brought was fascinating. A Mozart keyboard Sonata sounded much the same as it might have before his death in 1791.

The first of Beethoven's Cello sonatas (1796) received a highly musical "period" performance.

And a beautiful sonata by Mendelssohn echoed the year 1843 in which this Pianoforte was actually built.

The surprise of the day was a Sonata by Bernhard Romberg, a close friend of Beethoven. In a letter between them Romberg cheekily stated he preferred his own music. This had some justification, for his sonata had 90% of the skill of his contemporary and was pure delight.

Bravo Tauranga Musica for bringing things like this to town.

The next concert of the series is on August 7 at Boys' College Graham Young Theater.

-- Prof Barry Vercoe Mus D.