

# Captivating afternoon of memorable music

MANAWATU STANDARD 2/8/10

Three extremely varied works showcased the Manawatu Sinfonia's ability yesterday, highlighting how lucky Palmerston North is to have such a talented bunch of musicians.

They opened their winter concert with Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, part of the music he wrote to accompany the Goethe play about the Spanish Inquisition's persecution and torture of people in The Netherlands in the 16th century.

It's dramatic; haunting woodwind echoing through the piece, sustained by the strings and given impetus by the brass and percussion.

Conductor Sava Djukic extracted a full finish, strong and triumphant, and revealed himself to be energetic behind the baton. His podium had a somewhat bouncy top board, which may have inadvertently contributed to the quest for strong dynamics. It sounded good, though.

Next was Schubert's *Symphony No 8*, or the *Unfinished*. Opinions divide about why there are only two movements to this; Schubert left another 130 bars of music, presumably for a third movement,

## REVIEW

**Manawatu Sinfonia, from the New World to the Unfinished. Conducted by Sava Djukic, at the Speirs Centre, Palmerston North Boys' High School. Reviewed by Lee Matthews.**

but didn't do anything with them.

It's a piece of outstanding beauty and lyricism, and it tests the balance of an orchestra. The Sinfonia was sweet and clear in this piece.

Smooth strings chased round and round, with the woodwind handing the melody line off to the other sections. The second movement was especially smooth and rounded; Bronwyn Boddy on flute, Alexandra McNeill playing oboe, and Jeff McNeill on bassoon, didn't put a note wrong. They blended beautifully with each other and with their second part players.

The standout piece, though, was Dvorak's *Symphony No 9*, the *New World*. This is a huge, gutsy work, full of dramatic contrasts that the audience appreciated.



**Great satisfaction:** Manawatu Sinfonia demonstrate their varied talents.

It featured Miss McNeill playing a solo on the cor anglais, which sounds like a deeper, warmer oboe, but sharing its smooth and liquid characteristics. She worked hard in this piece, swapping between cor anglais and oboe, and the woodwind section wrapped round her work beautifully.

The *New World* Symphony has beautiful work for French horns, and David Pearce, Kimberley Dewhurst and William McNeill showed what the instruments could do. The *piano* section was particularly skilfully rendered.

The percussion in this work was bang on as well, with Tim Jones on

timpani and Sarah Edwards on percussion adding substance. Dvorak wasn't the man to neglect any instrument, and one section of this symphony is enlivened with the humble triangle.

It was an afternoon of memorable music, and the Sinfonia's members deserved the applause they received.