



Prime Minister launches top-listing CD

The Prime Minister watches a moving rendition of Mendelssohn's German Mass. Photos Godfrey Boehnke.

Enthusiastic guests packed University House for the April 23 launch of the first-ever recording of two choral works by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Missa Solemnis* and *Te Deum*.

This new, rich and truly New Zealand recording, which has now reached number one on Radio New Zealand's classical chart, was launched by the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, who praised it highly.

Guest speakers also included Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Hood, and CEO of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Dr Peter Walls.

Associate-Professor Uwe Grodd (Music), who conducts the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Tower Voices New Zealand and distinguished New Zealand soloists on the CD, says a highlight of the "marvellous celebration" was the moving rendition of excerpts from Mendelssohn's *German Mass* by Auckland members of Tower Voices New Zealand. The chorus was conducted by Associate-Professor Karen Grylls (also from the School of Music).

The CD is a truly New Zealand production, recorded in the Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington, with its music score and all performing parts edited by Dr Allan Badley — a Distinguished Alumni Award recipient — who is the owner of the Wellington-based publishing house, Artaria Editions.

Uwe is thrilled with reviews in Europe, where the recording has been selected as "Editor's choice" in the May issue of *Gramophone*, the prestigious British classical music magazine.

The Guardian calls it "a thrilling issue," while *The Independent* says "Uwe Grodd coaxes a magnificent spirited performance from his Antipodean forces". *The Daily Telegraph* praises the "celebratory movements" which have a "fine ringing impetus, while Uwe Grodd shapes the more reflective sections with real tenderness".

Hummel (1778-1837) was Mozart's most famous student and the last composer representing the classical era. Like Haydn he served as Kapellmeister in the court of Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy. The recording of the *Missa Solemnis* is a world premiere and has not been heard since 1806.

"His writing is exquisite," says Uwe. "His work has the richness and depth of the late 18th-Century Mass, but also that joyous feeling of his total belief in God, that complete transportation."



Uwe Grodd thanks the choir from the podium. In the background, from left are Dr Peter Walls, Prime Minister Helen Clark, and Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Hood.

In 2000, Uwe won first prize for the "Best 18th-Century Orchestral Recording" at the Cannes Classical Awards for his CD of *Symphonies* by J B Vanhal, another contemporary of Haydn, with the Nicolaus Esterhazy Sinfonia from Hungary. The CD was in the top ten classical charts in Britain and New Zealand. ■