

## From Reed to Rydal – 70 years as a church organist

In 1953, teenager David Brookes began his life-long role as a church organist – playing the Reed Organ in St Peter’s Church, Shrewsbury.

On Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup> 2023 in All Saint’s Church, Matamata, a ‘standing room only’ audience along with a host of musicians celebrated David’s 70 years of church organ playing.

David’s life as an organist has seen him play organs as far-flung as Shrewsbury Abbey, Holy Trinity Cathedral Auckland, Nelson Cathedral and Brisbane Town Hall, to name a few. He has also accepted appointments as diverse as All Saints Nelson, St Thomas Motueka, and latterly All Saints Matamata.

Sunday’s celebratory concert involved music from three choirs, three solo performers, four pianists and of course David on organ. The programme, enthusiastically received by the audience, was as follows:

- ♪ David Brookes: Organ – *Processional* by Martin Shaw (with the audience singing *Praise to The Lord* to conclude);
- ♪ Matamata Christian School Choir – *Friends* by John Wierick; and *Hallelujah and Halelu Hallelujah* with instrumental accompaniment.
- ♪ David: Organ – National songs of Ireland (*Londonderry Air*); Wales (*Land of our Fathers*); Scotland (*Highland Cathedral*); New Zealand (*Pokarekare ana*); and England (*Jerusalem*);
- ♪ Matamata Ladies Choir – *In the Garden* by C Austin Miles; *Peace, Peace* by Rick & Sylvia Powell;
- ♪ Abigail Evans: Flute – *On Wings of Song* by Mendelssohn; joined by Robyn Scott: Flute – *Eye Level* by Jack Trombey;
- ♪ Matamata Community Choir – *Nun’s Chorus* by Johann Strauss; *Hebrew Slaves Chorus* by Verdi;
- ♪ David: Organ – *Claire de Lune* by Debussy; *Trumpet Voluntary* by Jeremiah Clarke;
- ♪ David Brookes & Clare Hitchcock: Organ & Piano – *Finlandia* by Sibelius;
- ♪ Jazz Vidamo: Operatic Soprano – *Evensong* by Liza Lehmann; *O Mio Babbino Caro* by Puccini;
- ♪ Matamata Community Choir & David – *The Holy City* by Stephen Adams

Of course, the organ also shone. The Makin **Rydal** 2-20 digital organ was kindly loaned and set up by Ralph & Lynne Cullen of *Keyboard Music Systems* especially for the concert. It was superb!

Afternoon tea supplied by All Saints rounded off the concert with everyone wanting to know when the next one would be!

Congratulations to David, and a huge ‘*Thank You*’ to all the musicians involved.

Merv Hunt

(Secretary, Royal School of Church Music, Waikato)