

## Baroque Festival opens at St Francis 10 to 13 May 2018

On Thursday 10 May the complex and brilliant sounds of Baroque music rang through our beautiful Church. It was the opening concert of a series of events celebrating the Baroque period. The Festival has been a year in the planning and preparation and it was good to be present as it came to fruition on Ascension Day, a happy omen for its future.

Baroque is a term derived from the Portuguese word *barocco* meaning a misshapen pearl and was originally intended to be derogatory. Seen with Renaissance eyes all its art-forms seemed overly ornate, but now we appreciate their beauty and even find simplicity in what was then seen as complexity.

The **Apple Green Chamber Orchestra**, leader Camelia Onea, under the baton of Tim Roberts performed in that first concert. Tim was an informative host, conducting the opening piece (Prelude from the *Te Deum* by Charpentier) by banging a stick taller than himself – and that's tall – on the floor. He explained that this stick was used to keep players together in the now larger groups with more complex parts, and that from it evolved the conductor's baton which is also now falling into disuse because hands are more expressive.

The Programme comprised that Prelude, followed by:  
Concerto for two violins RV522 by Antonio Vivaldi;  
Sarabande in D minor by GF Handel;  
Flute Concerto Op.10 No.3 (*Goldfinch*) by Vivaldi;  
Air from Suite No.3 BWV1068 (Air on the G string) by JS Bach;  
Concerto Grosso Op.6 No.4 by Arcangelo Corelli; and  
Concerto by Georg Philipp Telemann, which replaced the planned performance of the Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 because the solo trumpeter for that piece had seriously damaged his front teeth in practice. So seriously was preparation for our Festival taken!

The acoustic of the Church lived up to its reputation, and the sound of the small orchestra, suited to the time and with appropriate instruments, was heard to the best effect, giving full value to the excellent performances by the various solo artists, all taken from the orchestra.

Everyone has a favourite, and I was completely enchanted by the performance of the 'Goldfinch' concerto, the flautist making the little bird fly with full and beautiful tone.

In his opening comments Tim thanked St Francis Church and its clergy, parishioners and staff, making special mention of Laurel Shiryapenga's encouraging assistance. We must thank him for bringing the Festival, and the wonderful Apple Green Chamber Orchestra, to St Francis.

