

Giant piano draws maestro

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Another dream has come true for Adrian Mann and the longest piano in the world.

Two years ago today Mr Mann, then 20, played the 5.7-metre-long piano in public for the first time at a concert in a Pareora farm shed. The giant piano was a project he had started as a teenager when he was only 15.

He is no longer the only one who wants to play it. Trained Brazilian concert pianist Artur Cimirro heard of the piano and wanted to play it. As he was going to be in Australia for a series of master classes, Mr Mann arranged for him to travel on to New Zealand.

Mr Cimirro was curious about the piano and what it would be like to play a recital on it, as it plays with a distinct voice and tone beyond what any other piano is capable of.

The concert pianist does know his May 28 concert will be in a setting far different than he is used to. Rather than a concert hall he will be performing in a farm shed - the home of the piano both during much of its construction, and for the two years since it was completed.

The concert will also be a dream come true for the young piano maker. Many times when he was working on the piano he would dream of it being played by concert pianists. Until now that has never happened, because, he suggests, professional musicians

did not believe a home made piano could be up to much.

"This is the first international recognition for the instrument."

Despite its unusual location, the piano has had other visitors. Pianist Maurice Till visited and played it only weeks before his death last month.

The professional Operatunity company have also visited the piano. Initially they only wanted to have a look at it, but they were soon playing and singing.

Time is treating the piano well.

"It has improved since it was first finished. The tuning has stabilised and the tone has improved and mellowed," Mr Mann said.

The changes did not surprise him. He explained some piano



World recognition: Brazilian concert pianist Artur Cimirro will be the first international concert pianist to play the world's longest piano - built by Adrian Mann in a Pareora shed.
Photo: SUPPLIED

manufacturers hold the finished instruments in stock for up to a year to allow the changes to take place.

The piano is turning out to be a good fundraiser for charity. The May event will be the sixth time it has been played in concert. Four of the earlier concerts were for charities including two in aid of Christchurch earthquake

funds. The events raised over \$1000. Tickets can be purchased from the Artma Spiritual Gallery in Timaru's Royal Arcade.

As to the piano's future, Mr Mann said there were no plans to move it from its present home in a farm shed. The farm owners rather liked having it there because of the interesting visitors it received.