



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **GERARD DOES IT WITH STEINWAY ALL THE WAY**

Two time ARIA winner Gerard Willems knows how to let his fingers do the talking – and the “chatter” is expected to be smoother when he helps baptise the latest edition to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music’s repository of pianos.

Willems chose the Model D Steinway Concert Grand from a selection of eight in the firm’s Hamburg factory in December last year as part of The Con’s major replenishment program. It has now taken pride of place on the main stage of the Verbrugghen Hall, The Con’s showpiece concert venue.

The piano has more than 100,000 moving parts, has up to 250 strings and 16 to 20 tonnes of string tension.

Willems, a leading Beethoven scholar, will join Michael Duke (saxophone) in a performance of Piazzolla’s *Oblivion* as part of the program for the annual Dean’s Gala concert tomorrow night.

Commented Willems: “This is the most beautiful piano I have ever played and it is rare to find a masterpiece like this with soul...I was in Hamburg on the right day.”

The Dutch-born Willems joined the staff of The Con in 1981 where he served as Chair of the Keyboard Unit until last year. He has performed with all the major orchestras, toured for the ABC nationally and for Musica Viva, and appeared at the Sydney and Adelaide festivals, with ensembles such as the Australia Ensemble.

One of Willems’ students, Alexey Yemtsov, will perform tonight with Vladimir Ashkenazy, the chief conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, at the opening of Ara Vartoukian’s new showrooms.

For over 25 years Vartoukian has selected and prepared pianos for major performance venues including The Con, Sydney Opera House, Newcastle Conservatorium of Music and The City Recital Hall, Angel Place.

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