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# Huge support for author

By PAUL BROOKS

**A** relaxed, smiling Prabh Mokha stood up in front of more than 200 people last Friday and gave thanks to a list of people; people who, he said, inspired and encouraged him.

It was a humble speech from a man who has written a fine book — *The Last Sanctuary* — which was launched in style amid the grandeur of the Sarjeant Gallery and the lustre of the works within.

The event attracted an eclectic crowd — from those of a literary bent, for whom functions such as this are near compulsory, to friends, family, colleagues and students who wanted to wish Prabh well in his writing career.

And he sold books. Lots of books. Published by the newly established, Wanganui-based Tangerine Publications, *The Last Sanctuary* is one of three books on offer through the firm, with many more to come. Their prime market is digital and e-books are to be the focus, but even so, a great many hard copies were purchased and signed by the author on Friday.

Aimed at young adult readers, *The Last Sanctuary* follows the lives of three orphans with a strange past, who have to unlock a 700-year-old prophecy. Partly set in modern London, the action takes place between an orphanage, where the three orphans mysteriously materialise at the age of 12, and the magical world of Ammasaya.

The novel is based on Prabh's interest in ancient mythology, his passion for scientific truth and love of humour.

Valerie Cowan, a Wanganui writer who, herself, will be launching a biographical and artistic tome this year, reviewed *The Last Sanctuary* and was present on Friday.

"I was enthralled by the

extraordinary imagination of the writer and his skill in weaving good and evil," she says.

"Incredibly imaginative and spell binding, it captivates from the first exciting page to the last conclusive and satisfying ending.

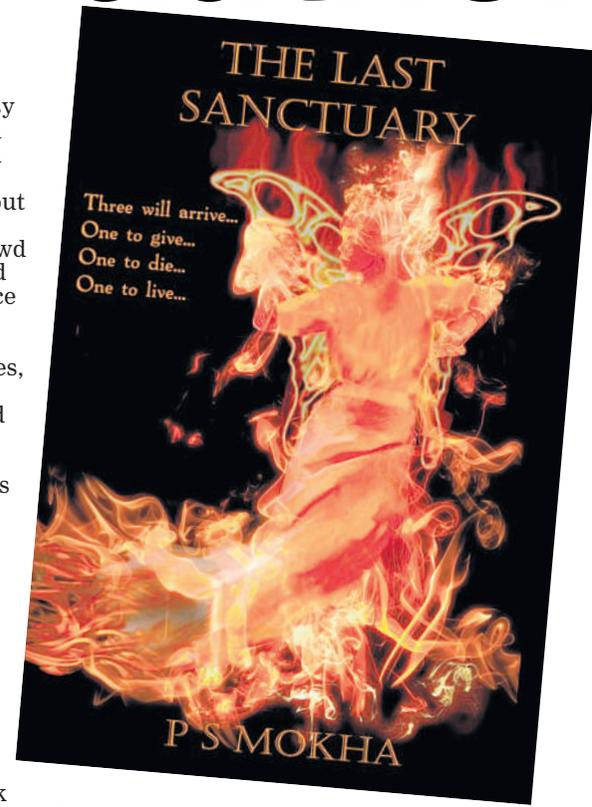
"This book is a worthy debut for Prabh Mokha. It is a unique story using relatively easy, sometimes very fine prose, maintaining a

high level of interest throughout. A fantasy and a mystery all in one with the added bonus that it will make you laugh out loud."

The large crowd at the launch and the very existence of Tangerine Publications — Joan Rosier-Jones, Gayelene Holly, Cass Alexander and Prabh himself — are testament to the burgeoning literary arts society supported by Wanganui.

Director Gayelene Holly says the Tangerine team was delighted with the attendance at Friday's event and thankful for the Whanganui community's support.

"We are also very grateful to Pak 'n Save, whose sponsorship of Prabh's launch allowed us to have use of the wonderful



Sarjeant Gallery," she says.

Prabh is an economics teacher and Year 11 dean at Wanganui Girls' College. A contingent of students were at the book launch in support of their talented teacher.

The formal part of the evening was kept short, consisting of an introductory speech by Tangerine director, Cass Alexander, followed by an "audience warm-up" conducted by Albert Sword. He introduced Prabh, who left his book signing desk to say a few modest words of thanks and appreciation.

Before long he was back wielding his pen and addressing his signature to many a book buyer.

*The Last Sanctuary* is the first of a series, the second of which is already well under way.



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**AUTHOR! AUTHOR! Prabh Mokha signs the Midweek reporter's copy of his debut novel at the launch of *The Last Sanctuary*.**

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