

Dark Mofo lights up sky

By ZONA BLACK

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Tasmanian winter festival Dark Mofo opened on Saturday night, bringing in cashed-up tourists and treating locals to an arts and culture spectacle. Sunday Examiner reporter Zona Black was there for the start of the festival's third year.

WHEN the sun goes down, the lights go up.

The annual Dark Mofo festival is heating up Hobart, with thousands flocking to the city from across the country and even the world.

A record-breaking 150,000 people are expected to take in the 10-day program, anchored around the winter solstice on June 21.

Opening night on Friday saw the now-iconic beams of light from Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's Pulse Column piece light up the sky, unofficially signalling the start of the festival.

Festival hub Dark Park at Macquarie Point, a seemingly abandoned industrial pier on the waterfront, came alive as the sun set over Mount Wellington.

The site was awash with a fiery glow as the Fire Organ blasted into life, shooting out mushroom clouds of flames and sending dark bass tones rippling through the night.

Crowds lined the Derwent River as the Night Ship sailed into the harbour, announcing its arrival with a probing spotlight and blaring horn.

Old warehouses found a new life with light installations from international artists.

Across the city, the reach of the festival was clear, with many businesses donning a red glow to celebrate the event's ethos: embracing the night.

With many hotels already at capacity, the numbers are only expected to grow as the festival ramps up, with the City of Hobart Winter Feast and sold-out shows from headliner Antony and the Johnsons kicking off from Wednesday.

■ Find the Dark Mofo program at www.darkmofo.net.au.

