

Review of Alleged Dances, 29 Feb 2016, Adelaide Town Hall
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Festival Review: Alleged Dances

By [Nicola Woodford](#) on March 1, 2016 [Adelaide Festival](#), [Arts](#), [Arts Festivals](#), [Entertainment](#), [Festival Reviews](#), [Music](#)

Presented by **Australian String Quartet**
Reviewed 29 February 2016

On Monday patrons flocked to the Adelaide Town Hall for the premiere of the Australian String Quartet's 2016 season, **Alleged Dances**. Bringing together the classical and the contemporary, the ASQ played Beethoven and Schumann alongside Australian composers Matthew Hindson and John Adams.

The ASQ consists of violinists Dale Barltrop and Francesca Hiew, violist Stephen King, and cellist Sharon Draper. In **Alleged Dances**, Claire Edwardes joined them as guest percussionist, for the Australian compositions. Their collective performance was exemplary.

We began with Beethoven's innovative *String Quartet in B flat major*. The first and second movements showed the classical influences of Haydn and Mozart. During the third movement Beethoven experimented with triple and duple metre, playing with the audience's expectations of timing.

Next was the world premiere of Hindson's *String Quartet no 4*. Hindson described his work as pure chamber music, in that no one instrument took supremacy over another. Edwardes joined the quartet on the vibraphone, one of Hindson's favourite instruments. The second movement was slow and lyrical, inspired by the birth of Hindson's daughter and reminiscent of a lullaby. Edwardes proved her mastery over the vibraphone, in turn punctuating and accentuating the melody carried by the quartet.

After interval were excerpts from *John's Book of Alleged Dances*, composed in 1994 by Adams. Originally written for string quartet and piano, Edwardes ingeniously adapted the piano part for percussion. She used a collection of kitchenware as instruments, ranging from large plastic mixing bowls to heart-shaped cake tins. The tones and emotions that Edwardes drew from her makeshift instruments were masterful. Every pluck of the string and twang of the Tupperware was essential to the cohesion of the piece.

We bade farewell to Edwardes as we returned to the classical, for Schumann's *String Quartet in A minor*. Throughout this vibrant piece each instrument carried the melody in turn, at once honouring and contributing to it. If dances were our theme for the evening, then the fourth movement was an impassioned reminder of the night shared together, the perfect final song.

Worlds collided for **Alleged Dances**. The result was a surprisingly unified performance, each piece complementing the next to create a unique experience.

Reviewed by **Nicola Woolford**

Venue: Adelaide Town Hall

Season: One Night Only