

Review : Ngeringa Concert, June 26 2016

The Advertiser, Rodney Smith

1 July 2016, 4.40pm



Australian String Quartet hits its straps with its splendidly balanced ensemble

Rodney Smith, The Advertiser

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MINUS some Webern, the lite version of their forthcoming national tour program worked very well for the ASQ as they presented quartets by Haydn, Chindamo and Mendelssohn in Ngeringa Cultural Centre's magnificent small concert hall.

The acoustic is designed for them, plus their uniquely matched Guadagnini instruments of course, and the new grouping has thoroughly settled into a splendidly balanced ensemble during its first months of operation. Of all the ASQ's incarnations this configuration shows most promise if the afternoon's concert is anything to go by.

Written following his sister's recent death Mendelssohn's *Quartet in F Minor Op 80* contains not a note of joy from start to finish although occasional rays of hope shone through the bitter regret and defiance. The ASQ took this narrative literally and hurled themselves into all four movements with immense drama and passion. They achieved a depth of feeling and world-weary resignation far beyond their individual experience in the resigned lament of its *Adagio*, a potent case of the sum surpassing separate parts. Furthermore, their portrayal of the two outer movements' fury showed a Mendelssohn that might have been had he lived longer.

Earlier jazz pianist-turned-classical composer Joe Chindamo's four-movement *Tempesta* of 2013 proved an energetic post-Bartok little gem, elegantly written and conceived. Far less intense than their Mendelssohn the ASQ perceptively brought a perfect combination of panache and nuance to this sophisticated confection that hopefully may herald a new compositional voice on the classical scene.

Australian String Quartet, Ngerina Cultural Centre, June 26