

Alleged Dances – Australian String Quartet and Percussionist Claire Edwardes – Adelaide Festival Review



Adelaide Town Hall, Mon 29 Feb

Opening their 2016 season and their national tour in the glorious Adelaide Town Hall last night, the Australian String Quartet presented an eclectic selection from classic and contemporary composers, sure to satisfy every taste.

This world-class ensemble, comprised of Dale Barltrop and Francesca Hiew on violins, Stephen King on viola and Sharon Draper on violoncello perform on a matched set of superb instruments, hand-crafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini in Italy, between 1743-1784.

Opening with Beethoven's *String Quartet in B flat major op.18 no. 6*, the beauty and dynamic range of the movements took us from glorious expansive and thrilling passages to the exquisite opening of the final movement that had the audience holding its collective breath.

To perform the World Premiere of the *String Quartet no. 4*, by the highly awarded and internationally acclaimed contemporary composer, Matthew Hindson (AM), the equally prestigious and exemplary percussionist Claire Edwardes, joined the quartet on vibraphone.

These pieces were inspired by new beginnings, and the birth of Hindson's daughter, Mabel. The combination of the vibes and strings is a rare and wonderful sound to experience, and the opening passages were exhilarating, with the extraordinary expertise of all the performers stunningly displayed. The huge reverberations of the vibraphone were, at times, bouncing off the walls, and at others, adding sensitive statements to the beautiful harmonies of the strings.

For the excerpts from John Adams' *John's Book of Alleged Dances*, Claire Edwardes amassed a delightful selection of plastic and wooden bowls from her kitchen, along with her favourite heart-shaped cake tin, and played them percussively, adding delightfully natural sounds to the movements.

The string quartet then finished this most varied and enjoyable programme with Schumann's *String Quartet no. 1 in A minor op. 41 no. 1*, to complete an evening of delicious fare.

The ASQ is a national treasure.

Nikki Fort