

Elena Kats-Chernin and Tamara-Anna Cislowska weave a colourful, humorous afternoon of music for four hands with one piano

Rodney Smith, The Advertiser
June 25, 2018 1:25pm
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A MIX of Latin American dance music, Eric Satie's minimalism and Russian melancholy certainly doesn't tick the usual classical music boxes but Elena Kats-Chernin has been exploring these elements and more with wondrous felicity and facility for many years.

Aided and abetted by eminent pianist Tamara-Anna Cislowska the two wove a colourful, humorous and sometimes almost knock-about afternoon of Kats-Chernin's music arranged for four hands or two hands with one piano.

There were moments of delicious comedy in the Victor Borge tradition culminating in their final number, Kats-Chernin's (in)famous *Russian Rag*, and many other moments of her characteristic wistful nostalgia in numbers like *Eliza Aria* and *Unsent Love Letters*.



Composer and pianist Elena Kats-Chernin and pianist Tamara-Anna Cislowska.

There was also sheer madness with high-octane adrenaline in every note, such as the Bach parody *Scherzino* and the mock virtuosic *Marcato*.

Like Satie, whose shadow was never far away, Kats-Chernin is a master at hiding her feelings behind outrageous exaggeration.

Only she could get away with a piece entitled *Butterflying for the 2003 Rugby World Cup*.

The piano duet playing was superbly unanimous, brilliantly polished and presented with élan, both personal and technical.

Occasionally they sailed dangerously close to raw comedy but their innate musicianship ensured this was an afternoon of music with humour rather than the reverse.

Thank goodness Satie could appreciate the absurd alongside the noble in art.