

Fascinating insight into lives and works of two genius creators



Rodney Smith, *The Advertiser*

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FORGING a program combining the poetry of John Keats with the music of Franz Schubert is a tricky business.

Their dates almost match but among the arts, music was ever a laggard and Schubert's style is far less romantically developed than Keats. It just doesn't quite match.

Thus pianist Simon Tedeschi found himself injecting far more romantic feeling and heat into Schubert's works than some listeners might be accustomed to while acting legend John Bell by contrast eased back on the accelerator in his superbly clear renditions of some of Keats' best known poems.

And so they met in the middle, producing a show that provided a fascinating insight into the lives and works of these two genius creators.

This is not Tedeschi's and Bell's first two-man show and their familiarity with each other's presentation styles ensured a harmonious and sometimes riveting collaboration, its 75 minutes literally flying by.

Sensibly, music and words were rarely superimposed, allowing the luxury of uninterrupted focus.

While Bell's almost classical crystalline, tensile delivery of Keats' high-flying poetic style worked well, Tedeschi's injection of heavy romanticism into Schubert's lightly constructed piano works proved less successful.

As a result Schubert's *Impromptus* for example often drooped with sentiment compared with Keats' *Ode to Autumn* and *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, which floated aloft.

This was nevertheless a most original and intriguing show that left no one in doubt that mixing art forms can cause sparks to fly.

Simon Tedeschi and John Bell

UKARIA Cultural Centre

September 30