

SUBTLITIES OF SOUND FOUND IN CHAMBER OF UKARIA



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Stephen Whittington, *The Advertiser*
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Economies of scale when touring dictate that the Australian Chamber Orchestra plays in large venues like the Adelaide Town Hall despite having the word “chamber” in its name.

It was a rare privilege then to hear the ACO play at UKARIA, where it made the room resound in a way that I have never heard before.

At the same time the clarity of the acoustics put their playing under the microscope, revealing subtleties that would be lost in a large hall.

On the down side, any little flaws of intonation or timing were also revealed.

But the positive vastly outweighed the negative as the ACO tackled a varied and demanding program with all their characteristic energy and virtuosity.

The concert began with an unscheduled treat, a musical amuse-bouche - or amuse-oreille - by Erik Satie, constructed in montage style anticipating later cartoon scores, full of French wit, satire and silliness.

It was matched at the end of the program by French twaddle in the form of a valse by Saint-Saens with an outrageous virtuoso solo part played with suitable elan and perhaps irony by Richard Tognetti.

Richard Meale’s *Cantilena Pacifica* found Tognetti in an entirely different frame of mind, beautifully finding the vein of tender melancholy that runs through this work.

Respighi’s third suite of *Ancient Airs and Dances* mixed elegant dances and intense passion with vivid effect.

Latvian composer Peteris Vasks paid homage to Arvo Part in *Viatore*, a work that conjures the vastness of the universe while being grounded in the human.

Benjamin Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* gave the ACO the opportunity to show the depth of its virtuosity which runs from first violins down to double bass, in a dazzling performance.

Australian Chamber Orchestra
UKARIA
June 2