

## ADELAIDE FESTIVAL 2020 REVIEW: HIDDEN SECRETS

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Rodney Smith, *The Advertiser*  
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### Hidden Secrets

#### FESTIVAL – Classical Music

#### Australia

#### UKARIA Cultural Centre

#### Until March 9

Ukaria's long weekend of Festival concerts curated by harp virtuoso Marshall McGuire got off to a flying start with this evening of two chamber operas replete with a degree of dramatic impact that belied their size.

In 2014 American composer Lembit Beecher added his own work *I Have No Stories to Tell You* to Monteverdi's 1624 evergreen Baroque hit *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* making a complete concert of two halves.

Beecher cleverly integrated his postmodern, terrifyingly dark expressionist composition (reminiscent of Schoenberg's *Erwartung*) using similar instruments and voices to Monteverdi's dashing dramatic chivalric scenario.

And the two works do reflect off each other brilliantly.

The three principal soloists, soprano Bethany Hill, tenor Robert Macfarlane and baritone Samuel Dundas all made a big impression.

Macfarlane's narration in the Monteverdi proved an absolute tour de force of hot-blooded fervour while there was real musical chemistry between Hill and Dundas as the protagonists in Beecher's more extended work.

Hill's characterisation was impressive and the sheer power and depth of Dundas' voice absolutely filled the auditorium.

Marshall McGuire directed Ludovico's Band, his own Baroque ensemble, with characteristic insight and it might have been an eye-opener for some to hear the colourations and sonic persuasion of such early instruments as the theorbo.

Indeed, Beecher's use of spinechilling instrumentation involving for example the theorbo and a violoncello played at ultra-high pitch was eerily evocative, even by today's technicoloured standards.