

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL 2020 REVIEW: COMPOSER & CITIZEN 2: HEATH QUARTET

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Peter Burdon, *The Advertiser*
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Composer & Citizen 2: Heath Quartet

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The Heath Quartet's first visit to Australia will surely not be their last, if the reception to their appearances in the Chamber Landscapes series is anything to go by. In the second of three concerts pairing quartets by Michael Tippett and Beethoven, they were simply sensational.

Michael Tippett's chamber music is hard going for many, but the Heath's account of the String Quartet No. 3 was very persuasive.

From the first movement with its expansive opening and a freewheeling fugue of daunting rhythmic complexity (pace Beethoven) to the strophic second, another brilliant fugue in the third, the rapturous fourth movement and a third fugue to end – the performance was utterly assured.

Tippett's is serious – read “brow-furrowing” – music: the challenge is not to get caught up in the intricate detail but look for the bigger picture.

Beethoven's String Quartet No. 9 in C Major, the last of the so-called “Razumovsky” quartets, is much easier to listen to and perform to enjoy, and the

players broad smiles from start to finish added an extra touch of delight to their performance.

The second movement andante, in which there's a palpable feeling of Beethoven trying something new, was especially fine, with its unfamiliar – for this period – sound of instruments doubling at various intervals. The ebullient final movement, another virtuosic fugue, brought the house to its feet.