



© Forces of Nature – Richard Tognetti and Erin Helyard. Picture: Adelaide Festival

FESTIVAL
Adelaide Festival review 2019: Forces of Nature – Richard Tognetti and Erin Helyard

Rodney Smith, The Advertiser
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Forces of Nature – Richard Tognetti and Erin Helyard

Classical Music

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

Adelaide Town Hall

March 12

Violinist Richard Tognetti and harpsichordist/fortepianist Erin Helyard are known for pretty hip performances across the musical spectrum, but this concert was also very HIP (historically informed performance) giving their whole program extra lift.

Musicians in Mozart's and Beethoven's day generally played more lightly and with less force than today. Tognetti and Helyard's performances were consistently controlled, subtle and airy yet full of energy.

Miniature fireworks, if you will, and the Town Hall proved perfect for Helyard's beautiful Walter/Schaumlöffel fortepiano and Tognetti's Guarneri violin, bowed sensitively throughout.



© Forces of Nature – Richard Tognetti. Picture: Anthony Browell, supplied by Adelaide Festival

Those familiar with Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata* will recall only too well performances ground out with modern steel stringed concert grands and violins doing battle for supremacy.

By contrast, this duo's interpretation produced a stellar combination of poised, balanced tonalities and vivid imagination where Beethoven's seemingly mad keyboard writing and string articulation made perfect sense.

In particular the wonderfully constructed *Andante con variazioni* moved back and forth between almost improvised decoration and the sure rhythmic tread of Beethoven, the classicist.

Earlier, Beethoven's *Sonata in G Op 30 No 3* and Mozart's *Sonata in Bb K 454* were coloured with mercurial inflections, very fast and fleet footed in the *Allegros*, warm glows in the middle movements.

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A fringe benefit of playing in earlier instrumental styles is that you can travel very quickly, with fortepianos the racing cars of the keyboard world. Tognetti and Helyard didn't even dent a bumper.

- Rodney Smith

