



Irish singer Camille O'Sullivan. Picture: Kip Carroll, supplied by Adelaide Festival

FESTIVAL

Adelaide Festival review 2019: Camille O'Sullivan – Cave

Penelope Debelles, The Advertiser

March 16, 2019 12:22pm

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Camille O'Sullivan – Cave

Contemporary Music / Ireland

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

The Palais, Riverbank, Elder Park

March 15 and 16



She arrives on stage in darkness, like a hooded witch, to sing Nick Cave's *Skeleton Tree*, and her affinity with his wild poetry is obvious.

Over the years Camille O'Sullivan, an Irish singer and story teller – who also happens to be very beautiful – has interpreted the work of the greats like David Bowie, Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen.

But she has always loved Nick Cave; years ago at one of her first of many Adelaide appearances, as part of the Cabaret Festival, she closed with a version of *The Ship*

Song that built to a swirling climax and was a joy to watch.

This time, she does nothing but Cave and his brooding poetry and taste for the sacred make them seem like soulmates.

In *Red Right Hand*, an eerie song that is one of Cave's signatures, she is possessed and draws the audience in like some kind of dark magic.

At one stage she joined the audience, kicking off her glittery boots and standing on a chair.

There is light and shade throughout and in *Into My Arms*, sung in a breathy whisper, the melody is all but lost.

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O'Sullivan, who hates flying but returned to Australia because she loves it, is at her best when she abandons herself to the rocking drive of songs like *Stagger Lee*.

It was a commanding display, full of passion, from a singer who is also a dramatist.

- Penelope Debelles

