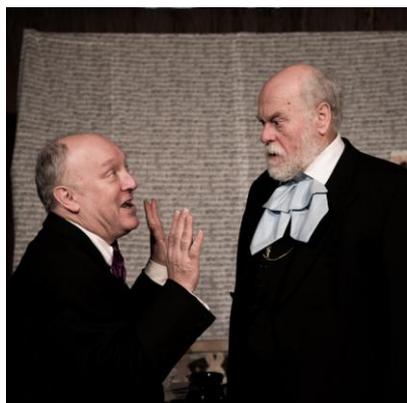


Oysters – Barefoot Review



Presented by Oyster Creatives. Bakehouse Theatres Studio. 21 Feb 2019

There's nothing like a couple of fine old English actors and a meaty bit of intimate theatre.

Oysters is a dense dark comedy created by Neil Salvage who also plays the principal role as the composer, Brahms. The conceit is that Brahms didn't much like his own music and was generally a drunken curmudgeon. Hence, his response to a party held in honour of the first performance of his new violin concerto is to retreat to a back room and drink everything in sight. He then has assorted contretemps

with his composer, his publisher, his friend Clara Schumann, and a powerful Viennese music critic.

Salvage says in his program notes that he found the characters and tensions contained in the play well documented as he researched his subject and, indeed, this hour-long Fringe piece has been "distilled" from his screenplay.

Onstage with him, playing three enabling characters, is Nicholas Collett, showing the qualities which have made him an award winning Royal Shakespeare Company actor. Also, stepping in from Adelaide as she has done before with challenging Fringe roles, is The Adelaide Critics Circle Emerging Actor of 2018, Stephanie Rossi, playing a very nicely nuanced Clara Schumann.

An unusual added ingredient comes in the form of Korean violinist, Ahram Min, who might symbolise the spirit of Brahms's music or perhaps his would-be conscience. She plays quick grabs of music, sometimes for satire, sometimes for illustration. When not playing, she functions as a reactive commentary to Brahms' behaviour; frowning, gasping, smiling. It is a difficult balance and a strange ingredient, both puzzling and interesting.

Of course, the play belongs to Salvage. It is a fierce performance and admirable.

Samela Harris

4 Stars

When: 21 Feb to 16 Mar

Where: Bakehouse Theatre

Bookings: adelaidefringe.com.au