



The Necks: Lloyd Swanton, Tony Buck and Chris Abrahams.

FESTIVAL **Adelaide Festival review 2019: The Necks**

Pat H. Wilson, The Advertiser
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The Necks
Contemporary Music / Australia
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To prodigious puffs of theatrical fog, three men walk onto the stage and begin their performance.

Chris Abrahams sits at the grand piano.

Lloyd Swanton stands stage centre playing acoustic double bass.

Tony Buck sits at his drum kit. Nothing happens except music for 42 minutes.

There is a 20-minute interval, after which they play for another 43 minutes uninterrupted.

These three Australian men, as The Necks, have been working together for over thirty years, and it shows in their musical mastery and the psychic communications between them.

The two sets of music, although clearly different, are wide-ranging meditations on sound, rhythm, melody, harmony and sonic intensity.

The first set begins with a solo contemplation of repeated piano notes by Abrahams.

Swanton joins in quietly, sporadically.



Lloyd Swanton (bass guitar and double bass), Tony Buck (drums, percussion and electric guitar) and Chris Abrahams (piano and Hammond organ).

Buck provides a gentle sound much like rattling a few dried beans in a little tin.

Coily, he adds the lightest hit of a cymbal.

The music grows in surges.

By the end of the 42 minute segment, Abrahams' hands are a blur, Swanton is bowing like a madman, and Buck's drumming sounds like a one-man bottling plant.

There is an element of ecstatic trance within their rhythmic repetitions and subtle harmonic shifts.

A Sufi dervish or a shaman would get it.

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Bassist Lloyd Swanton sways occasionally; between riffs, he stares euphorically skyward.

We don't get to see the other two musicians' faces.

Both are bowed over their instruments.

Is it jazz? Is it rock? Is it art music (whatever that is)? It's simply The Necks.

- Pat H. Wilson

