



Picaresque - Robyn Archer - Adelaide Festival 2019.

FESTIVAL

Adelaide Festival review 2019: Picaresque

Pat H. Wilson, The Advertiser
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Subscriber only



Picaresque

Music / Installation / Australia

Banquet Room, Adelaide Festival Centre

Until March 17

The title *Picaresque* is just right.

Living national treasure Robyn Archer tells tales of travel as an Australian scallywag with her trademark wit and verve.

Archer's body of work has long been a force for good across the Australian arts landscape.

The event is as much cabinet of curiosities as cabaret.

Archer's "carbon footprint walk of shame" is displayed on huge panels at the entrance. Boarding passes, hotel keycards, luggage labels, "do not disturb" door hangers, eye-masks, slippers, menus and more - detritus she has collected from years of travel.

Archer and her accompanist, genius accordionist George Butrumlis, occupy a stage in the middle of hundreds of tiny paper-craft maquettes of famous buildings from all over the world - she is a passionate collector.

Archer plays guitar and ukulele while roaming the room, singing and chatting with us about travel, cities and performances.

She sings around 21 songs during the hour.

Each song prompts funny, passionate, self-deprecating anecdotes.

How does she fit it all in?

She talks fast and sings wonderfully; her acting skill shines as brightly as ever.

Her specialist repertoire (Brecht/Weill /Eisler) is well represented and memorably performed. All her non-English material is impeccable, as is her elegant *Burlington Bertie*.

She has a musician's ear for language.

She sings Dean Martin's *On An Evening In Roma* and Brecht/Eisler's *The Children's Anthem* with equal regard for language, genre, cultural context and musical nuance.



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Butrumlis offers the perfect foil to Archer's larrikin energies.

His accompaniment is sensitive, finely judged and graceful.

The whole experience is richly entertaining and informed by Archer's sharp, bright, kind mind.

- Pat H. Wilson

