

Christina's World opens up again for composer Ross Edwards

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Between Black Mountain and Madfish Bay stands a farmhouse of damaged people and fragmentary stories, told by librettist Dorothy Hewett and composer Ross Edwards.

They have seen in the famous Andrew Wyeth picture a tragic tale expressed in folk-like melodies and snatches of popular songs.

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Thirty six years after its premiere, and in the presence of the composer, it receives in this impressively crafted production the love and insight it deserves.

Nicholas Cannon directs his well assembled cast with care on the sturdily constructed set designed by Christina Logan-Bell and lit by Ben Flett, a metaphor in timber and light for the whole production.

The singing is first rate throughout, as the cast snatch their notes out of silence.

Elizabeth Campbell is the older Christina, subtle and convincing in her performance, paired with Charlotte Kelso as her young self.

Their voices blend excellently in their brief duet and Kelso sings the alarming lullaby sweetly, telling how she drowned her new born baby.

Joshua Rowe is a convincing father bewildered by his wife's suicide and Adam Goodbum creates another excellent vocal characterisation as the shell-shocked uncle. Nicholas Jones, well remembered as Fish Lamb, is ideal as the seductive deserter Tom. The potential horror and madness in this tale of infanticide, murder and dementia is softened by the gentle melodies and harmonies Warwick Stengards draws from his ensemble of eleven musicians, coloured by the sombre tones of bass clarinet and cello, textured with percussion. The score is less ecstatic than Edwards' better known works but is an embracing environment for Christina's world.

Christina's World
State Opera South Australia
Opera Studio
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