

MUSIC
INSTAL ★★★★★
THE ARCHES, GLASGOW

FOR its fourth year, Instal's assembly of experimental acts from across the globe was extended to a two-day programme. So, cocooned inside the cavernous Arches for the best part of a weekend, the experience became one of intense sensory dislocation, ears rarely attuning to the incredible diversity of noise, while perceptions of time blurred.

The exotically self-monikered Charlemagne Palestine played his piano at the strummed rhythm of a guitar, slowly building in speed over 40 minutes. With the marvel of his teddy bear-topped piano rivalled only by his heroic Cognac consumption, his recital of *I'll Take The High Road* was as unpredictable as it was brave.

Elsewhere, the defiance of conventional instrumentation was widespread. John Butcher's saxophone and Ingar Zach's percussion combined for fascinating investigations of any sound-producing surface, the former eschewing blowing for sporadic tapping of the horn's metal, a skill given full expression by the percussionist Z'ev, who cycled through an artillery of drumming on steel pipes and sheet aluminium with duck whistle and some elemental beating of drums.

Distilling longer pieces into shorter soundbites for the occasion, German steel string guitarist Steffen Basho-Jung's beautifully sparse single note compositions and avuncular humour injected a degree of conviviality into the proceedings. But the real crowd-pleasing came from blues sage Kan Mikami – an impassioned guitar strummer whose voice ranged from near whispers to bloodcurdling howls, like the sound of someone reluctantly butchering a loved one. Bringing Instal's curtain down, Mikami was joined by Keiji Haino and Toshi Ishizuka to become Vajra for some frantic, straining rock.

JAY RICHARDSON

