

## REVIEWS

### MUSIC

WANDELWEISER

★★★★★

JOHN BAIN AND MARK BAIN

★★★★★

LEE PATTERSON

★★★★★

JOHN BUTCHER

★★★★★

ACID/NYLON

★★★★★

INSTAL, THE ARCHES,  
GLASGOW

DEEP in the belly of the Arches on Friday evening, listeners were draped across sofas, listening to the delicate call and response of Wandelweiser's flute and harmonica siren-song. Then the music was abruptly shattered as the ground beneath our very feet began to shake.

Welcome to the Instal festival, and to John and Mark Bain's musical feat of "playing" a building using oscillators and seismographs. The sheer exhilaration of this was like nothing I've experienced before, as a stream of people bubbled through the Arches bar and up the stairs. Holding on to banisters that buzzed to the touch, on walkways bouncing under our feet, the sensation of moving through rooms each with its own unique frequency was almost unbearably intense. The air became thick, a physical blanket vibrating skin and pulsing every cavity in the body. The performance, we were told later, blew four speakers.

From releasing the music of the universe at large to finding micro-symphonies in organic matter, Lee Patterson's *Burning Seeds* was a sweeping wave of notes over a crackling, other-worldly sound, a creation of minimalist virtuosity using tiny microphones and burning seeds.

Both performances were part of Instal's Self-Cancellation programme, which unleashed a diverse series of unabashedly experimental performances upon an enthusiastic audience.

In contrast to previous years, the festival's thematic approach to programming allowed new listeners to get to grips with the motivation behind the works, while challenging the artists with collective commissions. Responding to the notion of simultaneous creation and destruction, Rhodri Davies's live scoring included layering sudoku puzzles over each other, while saxophonist John Butcher cancelled his "self" out by taking his breath entirely out of the

equation. Never once playing with his lips, the mouthpiece removed, Butcher delivered a singular performance by playing feedback using the cavity of his sax and the harmonics of the room, wringing music from the air by a feat of pure physics.

The night ended with another performance coup inspired by the revolutionary work of the great visual artist Gustav Metzger, in which his 1960 Auto Destructive Art

manifesto was revisited in the group piece *Acid/Nylon*. Projected on to a giant screen, slides of nylon fabric, backlit like lights in a city at night, disintegrated slowly before the eyes as drops of hydrochloric acid fell on them in a sweeping, slow horror show. Musically, it was in turns heavy with harmony then consumed with violence, as the slides switched over for another icon of our times to be destroyed.

LAURA CAMERON LEWIS