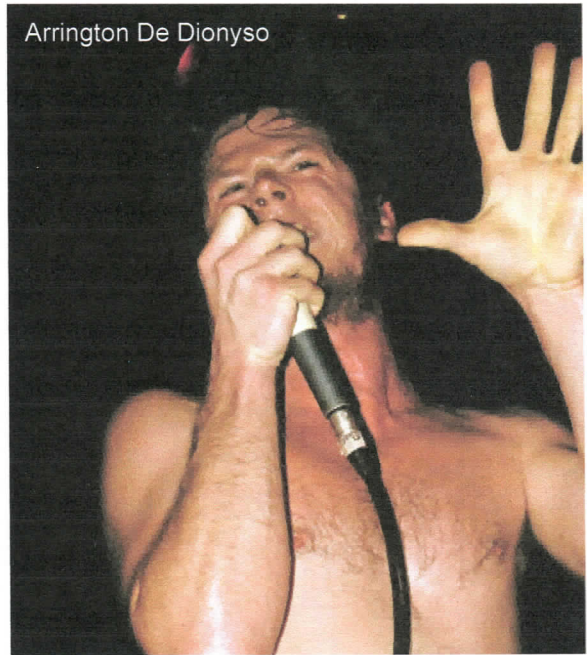


Instal 2006

Beard freaks out at The Arches' annual experimental festival

Words: **Stewart Smith, Matt Evans and Gary Thoms**

Photo: **Jakub Simcic/K Records**



Osaka's **Oshiri Pen Penz** are billed as 'scum rock' in the flyers, so I'm expecting urinary/faecal/sexual transgressions and over-amplified punk rock, but what ensues is much more subversive. Two presentable young men combine fluid jazz drums and spidery guitar lines, while a beautiful topless punk screams incoherently and pukes all over himself. It's a frighteningly disconcerting combination, part twangy boogie tunes and wrenching aggression that resembles the fusion of Beefheart and The Stooges into something entirely Japanese. A section of the crowd are moved to dancing, testament to the intangible rhythm that hides within Oshiri Pen Penz's squinty music. (GT)

The following two days sees some excellent free jazz from sax and drums/tabla duo **Steve Baczkowski** and **Ravi Padmanabha**, and New York trio **Eye Contact**. The former are at turns meditative and free flowing, while Eye Contact's punky but melodic workouts are complimented with bassist Matt Heyner's death-defying antics with a plastic bin.

It's **Arrington De Dioniso** who takes the form furthest out though, using bass clarinet, an elastic band and simply his throat to create pieces that are as musically exciting as they are technically astounding. His fiendishly advanced mouthing and tonguing techniques coax alien sounds from his clarinet, while his throat singing is filtered through the reed and wood. Putting the clarinet to one side, he produces an elastic band and begins to twang it between his teeth like a jaws harp. He changes the pitch by moving his mouth, while throat singing a pulsating drone. Finally, he performs with nothing but his voice. It's unlike anything you've heard. Remarkable.

With a tabletop of household detritus at their disposal, the **Bohman Brothers** make a peculiarly English kind of musique concrete. Random excerpts of paperback thrillers are read out, and the sonic qualities of cups and saucers, plastic bags and kitchen appliances are explored.

There's a performance art element to their warped Home Counties surrealism that charms – one brother's ongoing battle with an orange is particularly funny. (Stewart Smith)

Tony Conrad and **Keiji Haino** have played together several times, but until today only Haino's cat, seemingly not content with free bed, board and regular massages, has experienced these stellar encounters.

Superficially, they're an unlikely pair. Haino looks majestic and immortal. Conrad looks like he's about to sink a pint of mild then win a fiver on the quiz machine. One is renowned for his feral, cathartic excess, the other his restraint and patience. Although both live up to their assigned roles tonight, there's nothing predictable about their fusion.

Conrad largely contents himself with establishing a wide, pulsating violin drone, occasionally violating a hand-drum with a skewer to produce moments of creaking unease. Haino contributes simple, elegant woodwind flutters and then mounts a vicious assault upon the virtue of a digital theremin, reacting with the drone to cast shadows in the air. It's remarkable, but then he picks up his Telecaster and produces a sound that's massively physical and entirely ethereal, angelic and diabolical at the same time. He plays almost without conscious control, as if his pickups are neurons. Intensified and given form by Conrad, this manic beauty threatens to scour the flesh from our bones and roughly scrub our souls clean. It's an astounding collaboration, easily one of the weekend's highlights, arguably its focal point. I wonder if the cat dug it? (Matt Evans)

An older lady sits behind a mixing desk, calmly, but with utmost concentration, tweaking the faders. This is **Maryanne Amacher**, creator of "Sound Characters", drones, pulses and waves that take over a room, a building, a body. It begins with the faintest of sine waves and builds and builds until your head is ringing and you feel

disorientated. We've been assured that the sheer, head splitting volume is all psycho-acoustic, an illusion created by the music, but I'm not so sure and put in the earplugs. The audience are free to wander round the arches, explore how your position affects the textures and tones you hear. The relentless soprano drilling inspires some people to dance. For a moment it's as if we're at one of the Arches' regular club nights, surrounded by pilled up loons. Yet it's the terrible, transcendent beauty of Amacher's constructions that has made these people dance. I'm not quite sure if I enjoyed it, but it was one hell of an experience, and an untouchably blistering finale to the best Instal yet.

Infest

Curated by Edinburgh's Giant Tank collective, this late night fringe event brought together underground noise-botherers from across the UK. A welcome and necessary addition to Instal, it took place, in the venue's public bar, bringing unsuspecting punters into direct contact with all manner of horrible noise. Some flee, others offer insults (which only encourages the sonic deviants) and others stick it out and even dig it. **Red Kites'** free folk wailing over ugly Casio grates, while **Birds of Delay** simply bore by hovering over pedals and blankly holding down a synth key for twenty minutes. Thrilling sets of wild punk abandon from **Hockyfrilla** and **Muscletusk** (the girls wail and scream while the boys batter drums and abuse contact mics) and **Kylie Minoise** more than compensate. The latter's abortive but no less exciting set lasts only a couple of minutes, as his microphone fails and he smashes two lightbulbs in frustration. **Polly Shuang Kan Band** create beautifully shifting textures of voice and distortion, while **Jazzfinger's** ritualistic doom metal drone is excellent. **Wounded Knee** builds up mind bending layers of looped vocals and percussion, and **Nackt Insecten** impresses with his whale-song enhanced drone. The heavy psych of **Ben Reynolds'** delay and fuzz saturated guitar provokes one punter to heckle – proof he must be doing something right.