

Music

INSTAL 03, THE ARCHES GLASGOW

NEIL COOPER

★★★★★

AVANT-GARDE music festivals are paying dividends round these parts. Following Le Weekend in Stirling and Dundee's Kill Your Timid Notion, along comes Instal to shatter our everyday perceptions of what music can be about. Now in its third year, back in 2000 its all-day extravaganza of "brave new music" played to just more than 100 punters. This year, its audience has more than quadrupled, selling out before the doors even opened on Sunday afternoon, when our Paragon Ensemble opened proceedings with a set of eerily underscored 21st-century baroque, in which gossamer flute and cello scrapings, married to electronic clip-clop, referenced a low-key palette that drew in Highland laments and more martial gallops.

If Whitehouse's confrontationalist cabaret came on like an Essex-boy Suicide, and Ryoji Ikeda, walled in by a stack of Marshall amps for his CCI Sound System, like a latter-day aural trade test transmission, Cosmos produced a vocal sound of butterfly kisses and yelps to mesmeric, pin-drop effect. Following this with Merzbow's extended sonic crunches, which battered

many into submission while waking others up, was a perverse counterpoint, which, for all its sturm und drang, needed to be louder.

AMM's John Tilbury dedicated their set to their recently deceased writer and musician friend, Peter Niklas Wilson, and this seemed to influence the pervading air of soporific melancholy for this set of considerable space and beauty by the UK's elder statestrio of free music, whose astonishing restraint could teach the young whipper-snappers a thing or two.

Probably not The Boredoms, however, or Voordoms, as this band of Japanese agent provocateurs are styling themselves these days, having turned tribal. While its three-drummer core pound out their metronomic voodoo, leader, Yamataka Eye conducts with a box of tricks that produces enough squelches to recall 1970s electronic jazz, before seeming to march on the walls of Jericho.

A true savant genius virtuoso, this is a relentlessly thrilling spectacle designed to leave you breathless, even as you realise once again, just why Instal is so vital.

