

**LIVE REVIEWS**

\*\*\*\*\* Outstanding \*\*\*\*\* Recommended \*\*\*\* Worth a try \*\* Disappointing\* Poor

## UK-Japan fusion cements a reputation

**MUSIC**

**Instal \*\*\*\*\***

THE ARCHES, GLASGOW

THE Instal festival has been bringing new music to Glasgow for three years, and this year's line-up consisted largely of acts from the UK and Japan.

Instal regulars The Paragon Ensemble got things under way with an improvised set incorporating laptop-based electronics that ranged from white noise to the sort of avant-garde tinkling you sometimes hear during afternoon radio plays. Later in the programme, UK trio and stalwarts of the improv scene, AMM, played a well-received set covering a similar area.

Next up were post-punk veterans of noise and situationism, Whitehouse. Blocks of thick arhythmic noise howled from the duo's samplers as they shouted their

twisted absurdist lyrics at the audience. There was a knowing humour in their exhilarating performance, yet despite their attempts to usurp the language of rock and roll, both band members were shirtless by the end of their set.

Another borrowed totem of the rock idiom was the Spinal Tap-esque wall of Marshall amps used by Ryoji Ikeda, which looked and sounded great, although the distorted drumloops and snippets of electronic noise were not quite as ground-breaking as they were probably intended to be. Conversely, the barely audible guttural vocal noises of Japanese duo Cosmos break new ground, but there was just too little for the audience to get a handle on. Far more interesting was the pioneering

proponent of surrealist noise, Masami Akita, and his project Merzbow.

It was Japanese psych-rock outfit The Boredoms, however, who were the main draw for a many in the audience. Three drummers performed a stunning trance-inducing kraut-rock meditation before West Yorkshire's Vibracathedral Orchestra brought the event to a close with a more traditional and light-hearted jam.

With both the sound system and production values to do justice to a world-class bill, Instal firmly cemented its

reputation as one of the annual cultural highlights in the UK's music calendar.

*Hamish Brown*

