

Music



REVIEW: Ten Tors Orchestra

12th February 2011

When the Ten Tors Orchestra were students, their music-college curriculum probably didn't equip them for Sam Richard's *Still Life*, which involved collectively blowing across the tops of bottles filled with varying amounts of liquid.

But this was all part of this year's Peninsula Arts Contemporary Music Festival, which sought to combine computer-assisted compositions, with less traditional resources or unconventional uses of regular musical instruments.

If David Bessell's *Ophidian*, a simulated electronic investigation of the sound of a solo flute seemed somewhat drawn-out, given the available material, the rest of the programme proved totally absorbing.

Sam Richard's *Hidden Friend* exhibited some lovely harmonic nuances as it sought to disguise a familiar jazz melody by gradual disintegration, in a piece which successfully, though somewhat unconventionally climaxed in the middle. Here the orchestra's lush string tone, impeccably led by Malcolm Latchem, made such a telling contribution.

The evening's main work, *Mind Pieces* by Eduardo Reck Miranda, was also its undoubted highlight. This five-movement work for full orchestra, percussion and prepared piano combined indigenous Brazilian rhythms and computer-generated patterns with sound effects, and 'earworms', small tune snippets such as Ravel's *Bolero* or Holst's *Jupiter* which prompted the instrumentation for a complete movement or section. The result – a highly entertaining mix full of fascinating sonorities and timbres – was a credit to composer and players alike, under their inspired conductor, Simon Ible.

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