

MUSIC
GIOFEST VI CONCERT I

CCA, GLASGOW

★★★★

THERE'S something undeniably thrilling about witnessing someone making up music on the spot. It all seems a bit like magic – which was a pretty apt way of thinking about the opening concert in the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra's three-day festival at the city's CCA (which continues until Saturday). Not that there was anything fairytale about the cacophony – sometimes joyful, sometimes threatening – produced by noise artists Arnaud Rivière and Fritz Welch, which opened the concert, but its endless inventiveness was pretty miraculous nonetheless.

One made fearsome electronic howls by rubbing metal springs and coils, while the other clattered feverishly on cymbals, bells and drums. A metallic post-marathon blanket made a

glittering appearance, as did the bracing scrapings of a builder's tape measure. Self-indulgent? Well, maybe a bit – but it was hard not to get swept up in the flamboyant theatricality of it all.

The Bach-like clarity and rugged lyricism of improvising US pianist Marilyn Crispell made quite a change, but her 40-minute solo brought together a couple of consoling jazz ballads with bristling complexity that would put Ligeti or Elliott Carter to shame – and, miraculously, there didn't seem a note too many. Ironically, the evening's most ambitious offering was also the least fulfilling. Gino Robair's Amanuensis translated text into shorthand, whose squiggles the musicians of the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra translated into music – but it all seemed a bit too earnest to be truly inspiring. Still, the evening proved hugely rewarding.

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