

Wake Me Up, blushing ballad *Whole Lotta History*, the saucy *Love Machine*, a shimmering, graceful *Call The Shots* and the cutting-edge, clubby *Sexy! No No No...* culminating in the classic girl group pop of *The Promise*.

Even the video montages, background music and choreography used to mark time while the girls scuttled backstage to change into another sculptural outfit were intriguingly stylised to enhance the closest thing we have right now to a perfect pop package.

FIONA SHEPHERD

MUSIC
THE COLIN CURRIE
GROUP

GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT
HALL

★★★★★

IT'S astonishing the sonic richness that you can build from a simple rhythm – well, if you're Steve Reich, that is. His early minimalist masterpiece *Drumming* conjures well over an hour of music from a single drum pattern – turned in all directions and combined with itself in all manner of ways. It formed a breathtaking conclusion to the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall's fine weekend celebrating the pioneering composer's music.

In an interview before the

performance, Reich joked that he'd been furious when he first heard the Colin Currie Group play the piece – they'd mastered in no time what it had taken his own ensemble decades to perfect. And the young British 12-piece more than lived up to the composer's introduction: the players' muscular, driven performance seemed to surge forward, emphasising the volatile, joyous energy of the piece while making light of its fearsome technical demands.

They were ferociously physical yet superbly controlled in the African-sounding opening section, four percussionists attacking eight bongos, sliding in and out of sync with miraculous ease. The ear-bending third section (cue earplugs for the players) blended stratospheric tintinnabulations from glockenspiels with piccolo and whistling to magical effect, and even as the sounds grew more fairy-like, the energy never flagged.

The ensemble didn't hang about, moving swiftly from section to section in an already fast-paced performance. But by the glorious conclusion, which joyously blended all we'd heard before, the group had achieved an almost spiritual beauty. An exceptional performance.

DAVID KETTLE