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Classical

Inner Octaves

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

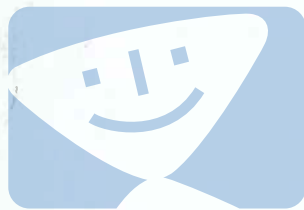
★★★★★

Billed as a programme of east meets west, this concert brought together European and Indian classical musicians, with the Nava Rasa Ensemble - guitarist Simon Thacker, Carnatic violinist Jyotsna Srikanth and tabla player Sarvar Sabri - joined by the Edinburgh Quartet, double bassist Mario Lima Caribé da Rocha and percussionist Iain Sandilands. In fact, cultural cross-currents were working at a deeper level than Indian and European given that Srikanth is a violinist from the Carnatic tradition, Sabri comes from the Hindustani tradition and Da Rocha is a jazz rather than classical double bassist.

In such collaborations one influence usually dominates, depending on the force of numbers in the ensemble or on the origins and outlook of the composers involved. This event was notable for largely avoiding this pitfall, thanks to careful programming symmetry. Two new works had been written for the ensemble, one by a Scottish-based composer with an interest in Indian music and culture, the other by a composer of Indian descent from Uganda, who has spent the last four decades in the US.

Of these two pieces, the latter, *Nada Ananda* by Shirish Korde, arguably made more from the forces than Nigel Osborne's *The Birth of Naciteka*. A preliminary sketch for an opera based on the legend of Naciteka, Osborne's piece feels like a work-in-progress, despite an intensely atmospheric central section. Like Osborne, Korde alternates solo passages with unison writing, though his piece is more interested in pushing the technical possibilities of the group to the limit. The third movement, in particular, is an exuberant virtuoso display of rhythmic complexity. *Nada Ananda* means joy of sound, an idea Korde captured in his music.

Rowena Smith



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