

tic Director Jonathan Morton explained, they struck a generally convincing balance between the two, with a bit of show-and-tell explanation providing context, but plenty of music to allow conversations and collaborations without words.

Most inspired were Sinopoulos's sinewy accounts of three of Bartók's Romanian Folk Dances, their folk melodies returned to an instrument the composer may well have heard when collecting the tunes, with wheezing harmonica-like accompaniment from the Scottish Ensemble strings.

The musicians were at one, too, in the intricate additive rhythms of Keyvan Chemirani's tricky 138, and the showy



↑ **Cross-cultural collaboration an enlightening experience**

improvisations of his raga-like Indian Way. Their closing Baroque dances from Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and Rameau's *Les Indes galantes* were less illuminating in terms of cross-fertilisation, but bracing,

gritty and vigorous nonetheless.

Ultimately, *Continental Drift* was a valuable, enlightening project, and one that managed to be both compelling and instructive.

DAVID KETTLE

in its musical theme, it was a thrilling evening nonetheless: Dausgaard clearly has a natural passion and empathy for this music, and the SSO crackled with electricity. But in the end, it was the music's darkness and grotesquerie that stuck in the mind.

DAVID KETTLE

MUSIC

Scottish Ensemble, Continental Drift

Summerhall, Edinburgh



IN THESE kind of cross-cultural, east-meets-west performances, there's always a balance to be struck between education and simple entertainment. In

bringing together two French-born musicians in the Persian tradition – brothers Keyvan and Bijan Chemirani, on multiple hand drums – alongside Greek-born lyra player Sokratis Sinopoulos and six musicians from the Scottish Ensemble, should the multicultural group explain and demonstrate their distinct musical traditions and the interconnections between them, or should they simply play together and let the music speak for itself? The former risks becoming a lecture; the latter could end up as a superficial wallow in musical exoticism.

Though the Scottish Ensemble's Continental Drift concerts had been put together in just a couple of days, as Artis-