



Unassuming yet explosive

CONCERT

Chris Potter Underground
Perth Concert Hall,
Review: William Yeoman

Perhaps still waters really do run deep, because the dissonance between American tenor sax player Chris Potter's unassuming demeanour and his explosive improvisations couldn't be more jarring.

Seamless, though, was the blend of jazz, funk, rock and classic influences in a concert that saw Potter's Underground quartet enhanced, in the second half, by a sextet of strings and woodwinds comprising some of Perth's best jazz and classical musicians.

The first half gave us a whirlwind tour of Potter's musical imagination as amplified by the equally fecund invention of his colleagues — Adam Rogers on guitar, Nate Smith on drums and Scott Colley on bass.



Train was written during a rail journey; Viva Las Vilnius was penned somewhere between Las Vegas and Vilnius in Lithuania.

Both featured superbly modulated solo breaks from Potter and Rogers, as well as introducing the audience to the robust, muscular style of Colley and Smith.

Bob Dylan's It Ain't me Babe had Potter on bass clarinet and the band in more mellow mode before things warmed up again with The Wheel, the surging solo work of Potter and Rogers rushing towards an incredible drum break from Smith.

After the interval the audience found themselves in the company of a "tentet". In the strings, violinist Paul Wright was joined by

viola player Kathy Potter and cellist Zoe Knighton, while classical bassoonist Peter Moore sat alongside clarinettist Adrian Cunningham and flautist Dale Barlow in the woodwind department.

The resulting interaction between these three sections was :magical, thanks in no small part to Potter's skilful arrangements of his own compositions.

In The Absence there were many memorable moments, including a dazzling flute solo by Barlow and a wonderful sudden change of texture as the string trio found itself playing alone.

Chief Seattle featured some superb sotto voce sax from Potter, as well as a lively jazz duel between Wright and Kathy Potter.

The rippling arpeggios of Rogers on nylon-string acoustic flowed into Family Tree, where Cunningham deftly explored the clarinet's upper register in a fine solo break.

A sweet duo between Rogers and Zoe Knighton on cello opened Estrella del Sur, the mood of which darkened as the rest of the ensemble entered.

Potter's solo then petered out as the drums introduced The Arc of a Day. Here, a placid series of sonorous chords metamorphosed into a wild frenzy of activity, which in turn subsided to make way for an extended unaccompanied solo break from Potter that led directly to Against the Wind.

After another enormous solo from Potter and an equally generous ensemble tutti, a gentle encore seemed in order.

The folk-like All by All, written by a teenage Potter, provided it.