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Moser, Davis, Concorde/O'Leary National Gallery, Dublin

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Jarmo Sermilä - Contours **Yuji Takahashi** - Like a Water Buffalo **Sofia Gubaidulina** - Silenzio **Tomi Räisänen** - Duo Concertante

Finnish composer Tomi Räisänen was one of three important guests of contemporary music ensemble Concorde at Sunday afternoon's concert in the National Gallery.

The other two were the soloists - accordion-player Elsbeth Moser and bass clarinetist Gareth Davis - for whom Räisänen composed the work that was receiving its première on this occasion, his *Duo Concertante*. The 20-minute piece showcases the dedicatees by alternating ensemble sections with cadenzas, one for each soloist and one for both together.

In his cadenza, Davis enacted what was like a conversation between a deep,

bull-froggy voice in the bass clarinet's lower register with a sweeter voice above. Moser's accordion cadenza was more flowing and lyrical, while the joint episode produced some quite intriguing matching of sonorities between the two instruments.

A similar blending of matching sound characterises the arrival of the accordion in the first movement of Sofia Gubaidulina's *Silenzio*, written in gratitude to Moser, who helped the composer move out of Moscow during the civil strife there in 1991. Having joined - almost unnoticed - the dialogue of chilly long notes between the violin and cello, the accordion then dramatically plunges the trio into darkness with deep, chromatic clusters within a church-organ sonority. Her performance, with violinist Elaine Clark and cellist Annette Cleary, was a study in quiet tension and alarm.

Moser also played Yuji Takahashi's 1985 *Like a Water-Buffalo*, an animal that symbolises poverty and oppression. It was hard to connect this idea with the music which began and ended with a bird-like, hopping figure and a central section

featuring a lonely pentatonic melody in a cloudy, canonic treatment.

The helter-skelter opening of Jarmo Sermilä's 1997 *Contours* for flute, clarinet, violin and cello soon gives way to a long and unexpectedly engaging passage in which all four instruments dwell on the same note. Not an unprecedented gesture; but in Concorde's spirited performance it grabbed your attention and held it.