

An enjoyable and diverse concert

By Graham McDonald

The CSM Percussion Group, directed by Gary France, ANU Arts Centre, June 7.

GARY FRANCE'S CSM Percussion Group present an annual percussion concert, and timed it this year to coincide with having Graeme Leak as an Artist-in-Residence for the week preceding:

Leak led the group in two of his own pieces, as well as performing a couple of his own solo works. One emphasis of the CSM percussion Group this year has been works in the style of the theatre show *Stomp*, which creates performance percussion works from everyday objects like brooms and metal garbage cans.

The group presented five short pieces in this style with *Diners Club* the standout performed on and around three dining tables with a variety of crockery and cutlery.

Two short ragtime pieces by American G.H. Green allowed two of the students a solo opportunity on xylophone.

Green was a cartoonist in the 20s for the Disney studio as well as a musician and played xylophone on the soundtrack of *Steamboat Willie* and these two tunes bounced along

well with some spirited playing. Graeme Leak's two solo pieces, *Briefcase for Amplified Office Worker* and *Enid thinks Rebecca misses Tom*, are performance works imbued with subtle humour and and clever use of office equipment in the first and a "string can" in the second combined with pickups and microphones.

Each half of the concert featured one larger work, with David Maslanka's *Crown of Thorns* finishing the first half and Christopher Rouse's *Bonham* in the second half of the concert.

Crown of Thorns was played delightfully on seven marimbas and is a work of great beauty with rich harmonisations and hints of pop tunes, jazz and Balinese gamelan.

Bonham is a tribute to Led Zepelin drummer John Bonham and very much the opposite end of the percussion scale from the earlier work. It had the feel of one of those early 70s extended drum solos and just didn't have the cohesion to work properly.

Perhaps too much counting and not enough feel, which was also a problem with a couple of the other works. This occasional lack of tightness in the ensemble playing did not detract to any great extent from what was an enjoyable and diverse concert.