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In the cover story in our April issue we ask what Auckland will look like in 2027 and find it will be radically transformed. We profile the new captain of the Blues, Troy Flavell, who tells us he can't understand why he keeps the refs so busy, meet the new owners of *Truth* – the feisty tabloid that has had a reputation for muck-racking – and ask “Is Advertising Dead?” in the wake of the closure of the much-lauded production company Silverscreen. Plus: Vic Williams is impressed with the new head chef at Otto's.

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Fiery AK07 Conclusion



Author: Eve de Castro-Robinson
 Web exclusive

Fire-Wind-Water, AK07's closing event, played to an enthusiastic crowd and gave the festival a mighty conclusion, says reviewer Eve de Castro-Robinson.

Nature in its most beguiling guises was the theme of this elemental concert of music from the Pacific Rim, the final bang from AK07. If the Auckland Festival began with splendiferous visual fireworks, the closing section of John Adams's *Harmonielehre* built to a transcendent state of aural explosiveness, the orchestra a-thunder with massive surges of electrifying rhythm. The San Franciscan's work was receiving its New Zealand premiere and was an inspired choice for this finale, particularly given its placement in the programme which began with Aotearoa's most unabashedly exuberant voice, Gareth Farr. While the Farr gave us party time, earthquake-style with portentous volcanic drums and shrieking piccolo, the 60 year old American displayed his mature style in a 40 minute work traversing philosophical and theoretical concerns as he paid homage to mysticism, Schoenberg's famous harmony treatise and his own daughter – a post-modern sensibility in the context of a minimalist environment. It's a mighty score, with a mesmeric surface appeal that belies its more thoughtful intellectual underpinnings. The centrepiece of the evening was the late Japanese master composer Toru Takemitsu's *From Me Flows What You Call Time* (1990), a Zen like exercise in musical meditation of the most exquisite kind. Gesture and sonority were to the fore, from woodwind subtleties of shakuhachi-inspired solo flute, growling contrabass clarinet and the plangent tones of the seldom-heard oboe d'amore to velvety sighs from the strings. Five percussionists



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(including three outstanding Aussie imports), barefoot and white-clad with coloured sashes representing the elements gave us the concert's most mesmerising sounds and much arresting theatre. Entering from the back of the Hall, they clinked their crotales in a riveting ritual and proceeded during the piece to play an array of exotic bells - Pakistani, German, Arabian, Japanese name checked the ebullient ex-percussionist conductor Giancarlo Guerrero in one of his garrulous verbal introductions. There was combat too, when at one point Gary France stepped off the stage with hand-played dambuka to challenge Tim Constable on drums. Strips of coloured ribbon on either side of the stage provided stations for two of the percussionists, and when pulled, activated wind chimes high in the balcony – a magical ending for a work some in the audience may have found testing for its curious sense of stasis.

It was heartening to see an enthusiastic Auckland audience turn out for this programme of challenging new music. There is more Farr in the concert pipeline, as the APO has chosen him as their Composer-in-Residence, and it would be nice to think that Takemitsu and Adams could be regarded as regular repertoire for this Pacific Rim orchestra.

Fire-Wind-Water was AK07's closing event on Sunday March 25.

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