

CARLISLE MUSIC SOCIETY

MANUS NOBLE (Guitar)

MARCH 19

St. CUTHBERT'S CHURCH, CARLISLE

Carlisle Music Society proved that lightning really can strike in the same place twice when they invited Manus Noble to reprise his 2013 visit and beguile a modest audience with flashes of sheer brilliance on the classical guitar. He is a 27-year-old Irishman with more than a touch of the stand-up (or should that be sit-down?) comic about him, who plays with breath-taking wizardry and panache despite a recent disagreement with a cheese-grater, as he put it.

He eschewed the great classical repertoire, apart from Dowland's 'My Lady Hunsdon's Puffe' with which he began the evening, in favour of decidedly modern pieces, several by living composers. Thus we were lulled by Leo Brouwer's 'Cancion de Cuna', an almost anaesthetising cradle song, followed by his celebrated 'Un Dia de Noviembre', with its lyrical melody that takes flight in a series of delicate arpeggios before returning to the tune that stubbornly refuses to leave your head.

Roland Dyens' 'Fuoco', described by Noble as being like strobe lighting, gave way to Yuquijiro Yocoh's 'Sakura Theme and Variations', a metaphor for the delicate nature of life and love. Sakura means 'cherry blossom', and this delicate filigree of natural and artificial harmonics was a memorable highlight.

And so, inevitably, to Gary Ryan, Noble's 'annoyingly talented' friend and mentor. We were treated to 'Railroad' from Ryan's 'Scenes from

The Wild West', a set of musical clichés wrapped in a vortex of complex rhythms; a veritable cowboy film soundtrack for the classical guitar! Ryan composed 'Hot Club Francais' for Manus Noble, whose delight in playing this dazzling piece of jazzy finger gymnastics was almost tangible.

In short, this was an inspired and inspiring kaleidoscope of sound worlds, presented by an impish and engaging artist who has the musical world at his feet.

Carlisle Music Society's next recital will be given on October 8 in St. Cuthbert's Church by the Atesh String Quartet.

JOHN DAVIES