

Concert teaser pleases

The International Showcase Concert, Canberra Theatre, February 11.

AFTER four years of these events it is with relief that we can report that the festival has got it right. They have moved the concert into the Canberra Theatre and while the Llewellyn Hall is great for some forms of music, the Canberra Theatre is a much more flexible space for the variety of performances these concerts include.

This showcase concert has a number of functions within the festival. It is a public occasion for the festival sponsors, it is a chance for the politicians to say a few appropriate words and it should act as a "teaser" for the rest of the festival.

Peter J. Casey's opening couple of songs certainly acted as an excellent inducement for his show later in the week at the Street Theatre, as did the performances from Senegalese kora



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player and singer Jali Buba Kuyateh and Australian/Egyptian oud player Joseph Tawadros. Kuyateh's music has that wonderful West African combination of melody and rhythm, while Tawadros' technical ability and sense of dynamics is impressive.

The challenge for such a concert and for the festival in general is finding ways of presenting music that is out of the

comfort zone for mainstream audiences. The Samsun State Classical Turkish Music Choir is comprised of obviously very fine musicians and singers, but their musical tradition is of a linear, melodic music and all 13 people on stage played or sang the same thing with no hint of harmony or counterpoint. They did it very well, but it became a long 20 or so minutes.

It was good to see a high proportion of Australian or Australian resident performers this year. To be able to call this a "national" festival, it needs to draw more upon the many fine non-Anglo performers around the country as well as building on connections with the diplomatic community which have brought any number of fascinating performances to the festival. It might, on occasion, be hard work listening to some of them, but it is part of the role to challenge the audience into experiencing art from different cultural perspectives.

— **Graham McDonald**