

Kim Myhr Closed FIMAV 2024 with a Dose of Magic

ERIC HILL

MAY 22, 2024

Carré 150, May 19



Photo: Martin Morissette

In an uncharacteristic move, this year's FIMAV closed out in one of the smaller halls rather than with a widescreen blowout, or whatever passes for that in the world of "musique actuelle." Despite the slightly closer quarters, or perhaps because of it, the final concert turned out to be just the kind of ecstatic farewell any festival might desire. Norway's Kim Myhr has been a frequent guest at the festival, last seen in 2019 presenting a version of his *You / Me* recording. This year he brought a familiar cast of characters to interpret pieces from his 2022 album *Sympathetic Magic*. With a group composed of four guitarists, three percussionists and a keyboardist, it bears mentioning that their opening drone was played on an impressive array of 12 strings that outnumbered Bill Orcutt's string count from the day before by a score of 48 to 16. While Orcutt's vibe was noisy trance, Myhr's atmosphere skewed skyward-looking with open hearts.

Outside of a brief stoppage for keyboard trouble, the eight pieces maintained a flow that sat comfortably between practiced and a little haphazard in the most endearing manner. With many, many on-the-fly guitar swaps and enough dangling chimes and triangles to open a small store, there was a constant blur of movement onstage. While frantic to watch, the sonic evidence was mostly meditative with occasional upwards shifts in energy that kicked off a side stage dance party among many of the festival volunteers looking to blow off some steam.

There isn't a genre tag that fully pinpoints the sound of Myhr's compositions. The closest hybrid description might be a world where post-rock emerged at Woodstock in the '60s rather than a Chicago rehearsal space in the '90s. With a backbone of extended major chord guitar and organ drones, spare bass lines and a complex weave of rhythms played with everything from tympani to what for all the world looked like pool noodles, the group embodied the show's subtitle perfectly, their spell galvanizing the crowd into a blissful mass.

As the last notes subsided and the players took their bows it was clear that it was probably the right room with the right crowd and the right group after all.

<https://exclaim.ca/music/article/kim-myhr-fimav-review-may-19>