

# THE SCOTSMAN

TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2006

## MUSIC

**SIMON THACKER**  
NICOLSON SQUARE  
METHODIST CHURCH,  
EDINBURGH

★★★★☆

AT FIRST glance, a programme of classical guitar music from five different centuries, and as many different countries, might seem lacking in coherence. Yet Simon Thacker's selection of masterworks through the ages combined to bring a refreshing new angle to the repertoire for an instrument which, in Thacker's formidably capable hands anyway, is one of unexpected versatility.

A stylish and sophisticated player, Thacker was as much at ease in the gentleness of John Dowland's early *Fantasia No 1* as he was in the flowing baroque dances by Poland's prolific but underrated Weiss, and the more romantic, virtuoso sounds of Bratislavan Kaspar Mertz.

In the absence of a full printed programme, spoken introductions were informative and witty, although I was left curious as to where Nigel Osborne might have envisaged his *After Night* was set. Perhaps anywhere that nightfall brings spooky, strange sounds. Either way, Thacker delivered a technically assured and atmospheric performance of this complex yet ultimately rewarding score.

Also receiving its Scottish premiere was David Fennessy's *Security Blanket*, which in its own way was as clever and effective as Osborne's piece.

CAROL MAIN