

CD review

Invert

Steven Berson, cello; Chris George, cello; Asha Mevlana, viola; Helen Yee, violin (Inverted Music 01)

Is there anyone out there who misses the Penguin Cafe Orchestra? Does anyone even remember the PCO? It was an ensemble of classically trained instrumentalists who had as much sympathy for what you might call the rock devil as the locals in the *Invert* string quartet do, and if *Invert* plays its cards right, it seems poised to achieve a similar kind of crossover success. Although not nearly as inventive as, say, *Penguin Cafe Orchestra*, this debut EP introduces music that's at least as

thoughtful and kinetic. Having inverted the standard string quartet (two cellos rather than violins, hence the name), what *Invert* aims to show is that string instruments can also be built for rockish (jazzish?) speed. Why else would self-penned compositions like "Machine" and "Glass Eye & I" tap into a rhythmic chug reminiscent of the Kronos Quartet—or better, South African composer Kevin Volans? If the *Inverts* were to find a few tricks of their own, they could very well be to the new decade what Kronos and the Penguins were to the '80s.—K. Leander Williams

***Invert* plays at Galapagos on Thu 1.**