



Director:
Hervé Corre de Valmalette

ERIC RUSKE

Music

Scottish Chamber
Orchestra, Glasgow City
Hall
Conrad Wilson

MOZART and Strauss form the sort of combination you either love or loathe. Classic and neo-classic? Genius and kitsch? The SCO, in performances as lustrous as those conducted by Joseph Swensen last night, made such questions seem irrelevant. What we heard was music in which one composer, born in the eighteenth century, briefly savoured his new-found freedom from court servitude, and another, dying in the twentieth, looked back on all he had learnt in the course of a long life.

Strauss wrote the prelude to his last opera, *Capriccio*, as music about music: a string sextet plays a work which one of the opera's principal characters has just composed. In its concert version, for full orchestral strings, the result is 10 minutes of exquisite artifice of a kind which Mozart would have understood, and which formed an ideal prologue to such a programme.

Swensen, who knows how to draw the most poised of sounds from the SCO, made the most of his opportunity to conduct it in a hall which provides the most perfect of acoustical casings for the music (though it seemed a pity that the concert's sponsor was allowed to distract attention with three large placards above the platform). Then, to this seamless tissue of string tone, was added the glow of Strauss's *Second Horn Concerto*, with Eric Ruske as a soloist so exuberant that he upstaged his own subsequent account of Mozart's little concert rondo in E flat major.

Nothing, however, could upstage Mozart's *Linz Symphony*, which completed the concert in a performance of mercurial pace and keen expressiveness.

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