

CLASSICAL

**RSNO/Thomas
Søndergård, Sunwook
Kim (piano)**

Usher Hall, Edinburgh



With the RSNO announc-
ing its 2018-19 season –
its first under incoming

music director Thomas Søndergård – just days earlier, it was hard not to see Søndergård's concert as something of a prelude to the main event next year. With that in mind, it looks like we've got plenty to look forward to.

Such a rich programme – Brahms's epic Second Piano Concerto, followed by Richard Strauss's almost hour-long celebration of his own musical heroism, *Ein Heldenleben* – could have made for a rather dense, demanding evening. But Søndergård brought a brilliant clarity to both pieces, picking apart and balancing their textures expertly, driving them on with eager energy and conveying their moods and stories vividly. In his introduction, he spoke of his own memories of performing in *Heldenleben* as a nervous young percussionist, and his strong personal connection was evident. From the swaggering confidence of Strauss's bounding heroic theme to the gleefully grotesque carplings of his critics, Søndergård delivered a bold, utterly committed account – this is clearly music that matters to him.

RSNO leader Maya Iwabuchi was wonderfully fluid and volatile in Strauss's depiction of his wife Pauline, and it was another RSNO string principal – cellist Aleksei Kiseliov – who gave a voluptuous, velvety account of the solos that open and close the slow movement

of Brahms's Second Piano Concerto. South Korean pianist Sunwook Kim was forceful yet thoughtful as soloist, occasionally hammering his mighty chords from a great height, yet producing a gloriously rich sound as a result, and bringing a lyrical clarity to Brahms's slower music. A captivating evening full of compelling performances.

DAVID KETTLE

MUSIC

Out Lines

Summerhall, Edinburgh



Supergroups aren't much in fashion these days, with bands formed from the merger of disparate individual talents more likely to occur like Out Lines, as a collection of more low-key talents without huge egos. The irony here is that those involved in Out Lines are the kind of people who should be receiving widespread attention, particularly Scottish Album of the Year Award-winner 2015 Kathryn Joseph and James Graham, singer with Kilsyth's vastly underrated post-rock group The Twilight Sad.

First getting together as part of a project commissioned by the Platform arts