

loud, rhythmic tones, especially when its strings are hit with such force as the King uses. Similarly, his voice is a powerful call which fills the space, the joyous, mantra-like repetition of his songs creating the perfect conditions for dancing.

What was most thrilling was the chance to have our ears opened to an artist so outside the traditions of Western rock music, especially one whose hiplife sound has taken him to No.1 in Ghana with the hit *I Want to See You My Father*. By the end he had encouraged the audience to bray like goats in musical tribute to their animals, performed a kologo and guitar duet with his European sponsor Arnold de Boer (aka support act Zea and a member of The Ex), and brilliantly introduced *Wicked Leaders* with the innocent but well-received words "we don't like bad leaders, we don't like corruption either... this is a song to advise them to be good."

**DAVID POLLOCK**

Seen on 10.04.14

**MUSIC**  
**SCOTTISH CHAMBER**  
**ORCHESTRA/COLIN**  
**CURRIE**

USHER HALL, EDINBURGH

★★★★

RIGHT from the start, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's concert under John Storgårds proved a deeply spiritual experience. But that wasn't because of any contrived, incense-infused holiness or lulling repetitions offering a glimpse of the beyond. Instead, through his clear, sincere and

seemingly simple accounts, Storgårds drew you deep inside his music, for contemplation or bedazzlement.

It was very much the first of those with the opener, Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* – but Storgårds's light, bright, brisk performance was a million miles from the ecclesiastical edifices of sound that other conductors construct. It shone from within, with the piece's three string groups beautifully delineated, and showed off what a fine, silky-smooth string section the SCO has.

The orchestra sounded like a different band, though, in James MacMillan's hectic percussion concerto *Veni, veni, Emmanuel*, which crackled with barely controlled energy as church plainsong fragments rang out from within the composer's kaleidoscopic textures. Darting from one instrument to another, Colin Currie was an athletic and superbly agile soloist, lyrical on a marimba and thrillingly raucous on drums and cymbals. And the concerto's radiant conclusion, with orchestra members gently striking miniature chimes while Currie intoned a plainsong melody on huge tubular bells, was spellbinding.

Following a Sibelius *Swan of Tuonela* that was so fragile it felt breathed into existence came the great Finn's Sixth Symphony – by far his most self-effacing and inward-looking. But Storgårds's hesitant, sometimes rather ragged performance made for a strangely unconvincing end to an otherwise mesmerising evening.

**DAVID KETTLE**

Seen on 10.04.14