

## MUSIC

### SCO, François Leleux & Javier Perianes

Usher Hall, Edinburgh



A Brahms concerto and a Dvořák symphony, with a Beethoven overture to kick things off – it felt like a strangely low-key way for the SCO to launch its new season. And with two big musical personalities on the platform – conductor François Leleux and pianist Javier Perianes – you might have expected more arresting, provocative, even unconventional performances, too. There's no denying that what they and the orchestra delivered was superbly crafted, beautifully balanced and eminently enjoyable, but perhaps we could have been forgiven for expecting something more.

Spanish pianist Perianes is a staggering talent, and his Brahms First Piano Concerto was a very human-scale, almost intimate vision of what can feel like a monumental utterance, with a buoyancy to his sound and nimble fingerwork alongside his more thun-

derous passages, shoulders and elbows noticeably enlisted to supply remarkable power. But contrast that with the wit, sparkle and sheer exuberance of his encore – the "Ritual Fire Dance" from Falla's *El amor brujo* – which he dispatched with a glint in his eye and a grin on his face.

Likewise, Leleux's Dvořák Seventh Symphony was lovingly shaped and balanced, fluent in its unfolding and paced very effectively. But – its giddy, dancing, crinoline-conjuring scherzo aside – it felt strangely restrained, too, as though Leleux was reluctant to abandon himself to its flow of ideas, or indulge himself in its heart-on-sleeve emotion.

It made for a strong, solid start to the SCO's new season, but it was hardly a concert to shine probing new light or make you think afresh.

**DAVID KETTLE**

## MUSIC

### Pixies

O2 Academy, Glasgow



THERE is a casual brilliance to Pixies, one of the great