



◀ **The Golden show might just be the most stylish effort yet from the enduring Kylie**

MUSIC

The SCO & François Leleux

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

★★★★★

IN ITS year-long hiatus between principal conductors, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra has made a smart move in enlisting the talents of oboist and conductor François Leleux as featured artist.

He certainly draws the crowds, as demonstrated by the ranks of kids and teenagers alongside regulars at the first of his four concerts this season, and he's a remarkable musician – exuberant, extrovert, sometimes somewhat over the top, but unfailingly in the service of his music, never

simply for self-serving show.

His opening Haydn Bear Symphony seemed to grab you by the scruff of the neck and demand that you pay attention – it was far from everyday easy listening, but fresh, surprising, contrary and revelatory by turn. Leleux made every phrase tell a story, sometimes transforming the most innocuous figurations into startling interjections. In the “Haydn” Oboe Concerto in C that followed (almost certainly not by that composer, scholars now agree), Leleux placed himself firmly centre-stage as soloist, producing miraculously liquid runs, exquisitely shaped melodies, and most importantly, seeming to have a whale of a time in the process. Not surprisingly, the audience lapped it up.

A set of German Dances by Schubert, orchestrated by Webern, after the interval made for slightly ungainly, lopsided listening, but Leleux characterised them for all they're worth. His closing Brahms Variations on a Theme by Haydn (again, almost certainly not by Haydn) made for a joyful, thrillingly provocative conclusion.

It was an energising, thoroughly captivating evening – one that can only bode well for Leleux's remaining concerts across the SCO's season.

DAVID KETTLE

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