

MUSIC

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Alpesh Chauhan

City Halls, Glasgow



It felt like there was a blast of Mediterranean heat coming off the stage in the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra's afternoon offering. It felt, too, like a showcase for the considerable conducting talents of Alpesh Chauhan, who made his impromptu BBC SSO debut last year standing in for Donald Runnicles. This was the first of his two BBC SSO concerts this season, and on the strength of his determined, demanding, thoroughly entertaining direction, his second, in February, should be another one to savour.

Chauhan is quite the spectacle, leaning into orchestra sections to draw the responses he wants, fluttering his fingers for trills of decoration, and even semi-toppling on one leg as if his energy has simply overcome him. Of his two breezy overtures – one for each half – his Mendelssohn Ruy Blas was all swashbuckling swagger, while his Rossini Italian Girl in Algiers sparkled with fire and wit, with BBC SSO principal oboe Stella McCracken nimble in its tricky passagework.

In *What the Wild Flowers Tell Me*, Britten's chamber arrangement of the second movement of Mahler's Third Symphony, Chauhan made an almost cubist collage of the music's unpredictably shifting moods, and his concluding Mendelssohn Italian Symphony found surprising

"Last night I was in the land of my birth; tonight I am in my spiritual home," proclaimed the newly knighted Sir Rod Stewart at the first of two celebratory Glasgow shows. Stewart has always been rock royalty in Scotland – not that that bought the audience any special privileges.

This disingenuously named Rod Stewart Hits tour – as if he would ever hazard the Rod Stewart Obscurities tour – was strictly business as per, so much so that he initially appeared to recycle the set list from previous tours, kicking off with his Sam Cooke/Isley Brothers covers and his middling version of *Some Guys Have All the Luck*.

There's no denying his enthusiasm for classic soul, but Stewart is always better when digging up the grit in the oyster and he finally hit his stride on *You Wear It Well*. The voice was somewhat diminished –

grandeur among its propulsive articulations. There was a cool blast, however, from Britten's introspective *Lachrymae*, which could probably have done with a more demonstrative account than French violist Lise Berthaud's somewhat detached performance.

DAVID KETTLE

MUSIC

Twin Atlantic

Barrowlands, Glasgow



Twin Atlantic's mohawked and leather jacket-wearing singer Sam McTrusty thanked