

friendship, in a way that could have been interesting if it had emerged earlier in the play. As it is, though, *Moving Pictures* remains little more than a predictable meander down memory lane; not unpleasant on a wintry lunchtime, but barely dynamic enough to hold the attention, for a short 50 minutes.

JOYCE MCMILLAN

(Final performance at Oran Mor today; and at the The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen, 29 November until 3 December)

MUSIC

Czech National Symphony Orchestra

Usher Hall, Edinburgh



We all got to experience a bit

more of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra's talents than we'd perhaps expected at their glowingly assured Sunday afternoon concert.

Following doctors' advice, 83-year-old chief conductor Libor Pešek was on the podium only after the interval, leaving the concert's first half in the hands of principal guest conductor Heiko Mathias Förster. And then there was mention of the orchestra's founder and 'Chief Trumpeter' Jan Hasenöhr – who didn't seem to fit as soloist into any of the music being played.

Förster, however, showed off a crisp, brisk technique in the concert's opener, Smetana's *From Bohemia's Fields* and *Groves from Mávlast*, evoking an almost Sibelian grandeur and spaciousness at times – it

was an impeccably finessed account, drawing wonderfully burnished, silky playing from the orchestra, but it lacked a bit of drama all the same.

And that same coolness made for an odd contrast with soloist Natalie Clein's blisteringly raw vision of the Shostakovich First Cello Concerto, by turns muscular, grotesque and wildly abandoned, but accompanied rather disconcertingly by Förster's precise, focused gestures.

It was a world away from Pešek's big, beatless arm-sweeps in Dvořák's New World Symphony – doubtless a nightmare to follow, but drawing a performance of thrilling conviction and passion from the Czech players. And that mysterious trumpeter? Hasenöhr! suddenly appeared as soloist



↑ **The orchestra delivered a glowingly assured concert**

in the orchestra's supposedly surprise tango encore – a little calculated, maybe, but

delivered with sultry sophistication.

DAVID KETTLE