

MUSIC

RSNO/Cornelius Meister, Simon Trpceski

Usher Hall



With the RSNO on fizzingly energetic, vivid form, it was nevertheless a bit of a perplexing concert from young German conductor Cornelius Meister.

He drove them on with breathless determination in an opening Smetana Bartered Bride Overture that champed furiously at the bit, throwing himself headlong into its whirling rhythms and abrupt contrasts – which under his baton were sometimes a bit too abrupt. But in the concert's closer, Tchaikovsky wrestling with fate in his Fourth Symphony, Meister seemed so intent on stressing the work's seriousness that it sometimes felt rather ponderous, with individual sections so vividly characterised that they struggled to cohere in a grander overall conception. It was as if Meister had so many ideas, so much enthusiasm, that he

was trying everything at once – with a result that was a bit confusing.

In between, Macedonian pianist Simon Trpceski gave an equally fiery, flashy account of Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, just as restless – even in his nonchalant traversal of its famous slow theme – as Meister at times, and sometimes transforming what might have been glittering virtuoso solos into rather impenetrable flurries of notes.

His encores, however, were truly magical – and equally generous. First up, the slow movement of Rachmaninov's Cello Sonata, for which Trpceski was joined by RSNO Principal Cello Aleksei Kiseliiov in a gloriously long-limbed, full-toned, moving performance. And second – yes, second – came an exuberant Brahms Hungarian Dance No. 5, in a good-natured piano duet with conductor Meister. Trpceski had conjured up captivating moments of spontaneous musical sharing – rare and to be cherished.

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