

cooler-than-thou approach to music criticism, Feldstein has the right mix of vulnerability and brazen self-confidence to sell us on the complex performative nature of adolescence.

Alas, as Johanna learns the error of her ways, the film, which is directed by Coky Giedroyc, transforms into a weird mea culpa for having strong opinions on mediocre art. By those standards it probably expects a pass.

**ALISTAIR HARKNESS**

## **CLASSICAL**

### **RSNO/Thomas Søndergård**

Usher Hall, Edinburgh

★★★★★

Richard Strauss at his most philosophical, Mahler at his most transcendental. There was a risk that the RSNO's concert might offer an overly rich menu, and one without much contrast – not to mention asking a lot of the orchestra's musicians. On that second point: the RSNO players rose to the considerable challenges of Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* magnificently, with remarkable conviction and assurance in both pieces' challenging, exposed solo writing, as well as a clean, confident sheen to their ensemble playing. They're on excellent form.

Not least in *Also sprach Zar-*

*athustra's* epic opening, made famous by 2001 and countless other film and TV uses, but which can seldom have sounded quite so vivid and – well, meant than it did here. And it was that sense of conveying meaning and intention that most impressed, as though conductor Thomas Søndergård had vital things to tell us, and to make us think about. His Strauss felt perhaps overly unhurried at first, but he built a persuasive sense of momentum as the piece progressed. And his Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde* went in the other direction: from volatile, nervy energy in the opening 'Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde' to time virtually grinding to a halt in the closing 'Der Abschied'. Tenor Simon O'Neill struggled to project over Søndergård's vivid colours in the opening song, though he quickly found a more effective balance. Alto Jane Irwin, meanwhile, brought sorrow, wonder and elation to Mahler's closing farewell to life. It was a truly memorable concert, and a deeply moving evening.

**DAVID KETTLE**

## **MUSIC**

### **Clannad**

Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow

★★★★★

Clannad, the Donegal family band who became the go-to