

political howler The Lebanon.

Clearly some songs are more equal than others, and their run of classic synth pop hits from the early Eighties is still hard to beat for unexpected earworm melodies, whether sung by the core trio or delivered in somewhat streamlined fashion by a smart backing band with detachable keytars.

Don't You Want Me was still greeted like the kitchen sink anthem it is but the more left-field, frantic pop numbers The Sound Of The Crowd and (Keep Feeling) Fascination, Motown stomper Mirror Man, beloved album track The Things That Dreams Are Made Of and the euphoric Oakey solo hit Together In Electric Dreams are as well preserved as Oakey himself.

FIONA SHEPHERD

MUSIC

Scottish Chamber Orchestra/Kristian Bezuidenhout

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh



With principal conductor Robin Ticciati still indisposed, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra had had to come

up with a plan B for its nicely provocative concert contrasting Mozart keyboard concertos with two works very much of our own times. What they arrived at, however, brought some wholly unexpected and exciting new perspectives on the evening.

First up, young British conductor Duncan Ward – championed by Simon Rattle, and you could see why – who directed the two contemporary works with elegant precision and seemingly unstoppable enthusiasm. He was in his element amid the knowing wit of Thomas Adès's Chamber Symphony, in a bright, eager, expertly paced account, and he was highly persuasive, too, in the almost expressionist lyricism of Helen Grime's A Cold Spring, sculpting its angular lines with a rapturous richness. The two works were only brief, but they still displayed a superb, effortless partnership between conductor and ensemble.

For the two Mozart concertos, however, South African fortepianist Kristian Bezuidenhout was not only making his SCO debut as soloist, but also as conductor, directing the ensemble from the

keyboard – and with no more than a few flicks of his head and a gesture here and there, he did a marvellously incisive job of it. His Piano Concerto No. 22 might have felt a touch thoughtful, more focused on imposing grandeur than energy, but his Piano Concerto No. 20 was bracingly brisk and immaculately articulated. And with the fastidious detail and vigorous freshness from both men and orchestra alike, it was as if Ticciati had been there all along.

DAVID KETTLE



↑ **Kristian Bezuidenhout**
pulled double duty

MUSIC

The Chemical Brothers