

## **The SCO and Karina Canellakis**

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh



**YOUNG** New York conductor Karina Canellakis is fast developing a very fruitful partnership with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. And it's a relationship that can only be welcomed: with her precise, demonstrative direction, her ear for detail and balance, and her outgoing, generous spirit, she urges particularly vivid, strongly defined playing from the SCO musicians.

That said, Canellakis's concert of Bach and Mendelssohn had its moments where her sense of direction seemed to falter slightly, and where there was a strange thinness to the SCO's sound – most noticeably in the opener, Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, which took a while to get properly warmed up. Even the hushed radiance of the "Dresden Amen" in Mendelssohn's *Reformation Symphony* sounded a little workaday rather than wonderful.

She gave a magnificent account of Webern's kaleidoscopic orchestration of the final *ricercar* from Bach's *Musical Offering*, however, achieving a near miraculous balance of surface detail with overall blend in eight minutes of remarkably concentrated expression.

And her knack for textural transparency came into its own in the *Reformation Symphony's* finale, its contrapuntal complexities beautifully teased apart in an account that bounced with vigour and wide-eyed eagerness.

In between, SCO concertmaster Benjamin Marquise Gilmore directed Bach's *E major Violin Concerto* from his instrument in a remarkably fresh, fluid account, the startling rhythmic freedom of his solo line contrasting tellingly with the strict tempos of the orchestra.

There was almost something rhapsodic about his nimbly articulated reading – it was quite a personal perspective on the well-known piece, perhaps, but no less convincing for that.

**DAVID KETTLE**