

**SCO/Richard Egarr**

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

★★★★

ONLY a single audience member had ever heard Schumann's Requiem live, conductor Richard Egarr's impromptu pre-concert poll discovered – and nobody in the Scottish Chamber Orchestra or SCO Chorus had ever performed it before, either. This was a very rare outing for the work, all right, and a welcome one, too, not least considering its unhappy background. It was Schumann's final work, written in the Endenich asylum where he spent his last days, and almost certainly written for himself.

Indeed, it's hard to separate the music of Schumann's Requiem from its sombre backstory, especially in its obsessive, fiercely worked counterpoint, its jagged melodic writing and its overall air of melancholy introspection. Whether or not it's the masterpiece that Egarr clearly considers it to be is up for debate, but it's hard to imagine a more committed, considered, focused performance than this.

The SCO Chorus were on magnificent form, singing as if with a single voice in Schumann's chordal writing and delivering his dense fugues with superb clarity. And Egarr reached bodily into the SCO ensemble to draw out beautifully shaped, assertive performances. His four vocal soloists didn't get a huge amount to do, but tenor Thomas Hobbs stood out with his strongly projected, swelling lines.

Before the interval Egarr had led another rarity, Brahms's "other" Serenade, the less frequently performed No. 2 in A, in a gritty, passionate account that drew splendidly on the distinctive sonorities of the small, violin-less ensemble – "dark and deep and delicious"

**THEATRE****Our Fathers**

Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh

★★★★

IT'S 110 years since the writer and critic Edmund Gosse published his great memoir *Father and Son*; but to Nicholas Bone and Rob Drummond, the two Scottish-based theatre-makers who have created this new show inspired by Gosse's work, the struggle it describes – between a profoundly religious father and an atheist son – is still a living thing, shaping their lives from day to day.

Bone is the son of a Church of England bishop, whose father died a few years ago; Drummond's father is a Church of Scotland minister, now retired. Yet neither Bone nor Drummond has been able to share his father's faith; and so now – on a beautiful set by Karen Tennant that combines austere Methodist-style church architecture with glowing cases and tanks full of the scientific specimens that began to challenge faith in the

in Egarr's own words, which are hard to disagree with.

**DAVID KETTLE****MUSIC****Metallica**

Hydro, Glasgow

★★★★

"Up here after 36 years and still kicking ass," is how singer and guitarist James Hetfield described Metallica's 2017 iteration of their tenth album *Hardwired... to Self-Destruct*, although a stage show worthy of U2 might have been part of the attraction for a crowd of thousands rammed into every tier of the Hydro.

For a band which pioneered thrash metal, Metallica do a