

# Reviews

## MUSIC

### SCO, Richard Egarr & Carolyn Sampson

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

★★★★★

WITH a hearty, pantomime-style "Good evening!" to kick off proceedings – energetically reciprocated by the enthusiastic audience – conductor Richard Egarr made it clear his concert with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra was going to be an evening of theatre. And there was plenty of flamboyant drama to be savoured in the "bunch of my favourite stuff" (as he described it) he'd selected from Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* – from prancing monkeys to sprightly fairies and lusty haymakers. Egarr's fizzing energy continued in the work's more abstract symphonies and overtures, all dispatched with in high-definition, high-contrast accounts and a spirited spring in their step, Egarr urging the SCO players on from astride a piano stool in front of his harpsichord.

What stole the show, however – in fact, what stole virtually the whole evening – was the limpid, bell-like soprano

of Carolyn Sampson, pure and precise in four of *The Fairy Queen's* songs, among which the tragic, sobbing "O let me weep" – accompanied by just Egarr, Matthew Wadsworth's tasteful theorbo and Benjamin Marquise Gilmore's finely turned violin – left a stunned silence in the hall.

Sampson returned after the interval for three songs from Handel's *Semele*, her prancing dance with a hand mirror in "Myself I shall adore" displaying a knowing sense of wit, alongside astonishing vocal control in a line fairly dripping with ornaments. A grand Music for the Royal Fireworks high on sonic splendour made for an explosive close to what had been an exceptional evening.

**DAVID KETTLE**

## MUSIC

### KT Tunstall

Alhambra, Dunfermline

★★★★★

IT'S likely that most people in the room would have been shocked to hear KT Tunstall remind us that she's been in the public eye for a whole 15