

SCO/Francois Leleux

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh



"Extremely musical and lyrical" was the perhaps somewhat anodyne description that oboist and conductor François Leleux gave to the three serenades in his programme with the SCO. Music of the evening these serenades might be – lighter fare designed to entertain and amuse, rather than to provoke or challenge – but there was little anodyne about Leleux's forthright, impeccably detailed accounts, nor the SCO players' bracing, considered performances.

Things got off to a dramatic start with the seldom heard, strings-only Italian Serenade by Hugo Wolf, played for all its worth by an ensemble alive to its dramatic, often piquant details. Slight it might be, but Leleux clearly believes deeply in the piece's charms, and it made a huge impression.

After some sizeable stage shifting, a ten-strong wind ensemble, plus cello and bass, assembled for Dvořák's gruff, rustic D minor Serenade, in

what ended up a surprisingly aristocratic account. It was exquisitely balanced and full of rhythmic suppleness, with a mischievous scamper to the furiant section of its minuet, and some beautifully caressing duetting between Leleux as lead oboe and SCO principal clarinet Maximiliano Martín. If Leleux slightly rounded off the work's rawer edges and bucolic charm, he made up for it with sheer sonic beauty, and his bounding, breathless finale confirmed the piece's irresistible sense of fun.

Things calmed slightly after the interval, for Brahms's six-movement First Serenade, which brought the SCO winds and strings back together, but that only seemed fitting for this weightier piece. Unchallenging or not, Leleux's trio of serenades charmed and delighted.

DAVID KETTLE**MUSIC****The Zutons**

Glasgow Barrowland



Another band reforms to tour another "classic" album. Fortunately, this time it was The