

Millan's 1996 trumpet concerto, *Epiclesis*, a moving, ultimately theatrical, meditation on the power of transformation at the heart of the Eucharist. This was a truly transformative performance, featuring solo trumpeter Ole Edvard Antonsen.

Arising out of a near-imperceptible orchestral haze, Antonsen's interjecting flourishes entered tentatively, leading us with increasing urgency to that point of catharsis where he is joined by two other trumpets in a typically MacMillanesque romp, before subsiding into a magical moment (ultimately offstage) of quiet reflection.

Walton's 1960 Second Symphony took time to find its acerbic virility, but by the spicily scented *Lento assai* it took wings and flew.

KEN WALTON

MUSIC

Scottish Chamber Orchestra/Jukka-Pekka Saraste

Usher Hall

★★★★★

Definition, drive and determination: Finnish conductor Jukka-Pekka Saraste's evening with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra was an electrifying and con-

stantly surprising experience. Most of all, perhaps, in his concluding Sibelius Third Symphony, which he grabbed by the scruff of its neck in an urgent, vigorously projected first movement, and which he finished in a blaze of affirmation. The SCO players lapped up Saraste's exacting attention, with beautifully translucent but chiselled textures, and a bite to their playing that made it thrillingly present.

Before the interval, Canadian pianist Marc-André Hamelin gave a similarly eyebrow-raising account of the Chopin Second Piano Concerto, a world away from dreamy Romantic indulgence, replacing it with crystalline clarity, an almost Mozartean sense of balance and a surprising muscularity.

That ruggedness continued in a blistering encore, Hamelin's own darkly witty *Toccata on L'homme armé*, which sent him cascading up and down the keyboard in an unashamedly virtuoso display.

Saraste opened with an expansive Beethoven *Leonore No. 3 Overture* that felt like he was barely keeping the music's surging power in check. It was an evening of bristling energy, guided and channelled by expert hands.

DAVID KETTLE