

Boys number to send Zappa rookies running. The hardened fans lapped it up, adding their own guttural heckles and declarations of love for wonderful woodwind player Scheila Gonzales to the discordant vocal symphony.

A two-and-a-half hour demonstration of Zappa's use of rock band as orchestra followed, encompassing the psychedelic doowop of Motherly Love, nightmare reverie of Mom & Dad, funk rock maelstrom I'm the Slime and a meticulously executed James Bond theme to complement Zappa's own gonzo secret agent Studebaker Hoch in the first half and a lesser nonsense prog jazz second half incorporating Let's Move to Cleveland and Cosmik Debris.

**FIONA SHEPHERD**

## **MUSIC**

### **SCO/Mitsuko Uchida**

Usher Hall, Edinburgh

★★★★

How conductor Robin Ticciati pulls it off is – well, nothing short of miraculous. This was the opening concert of his final season with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and

it was brimming over with the meticulous attention to detail that has characterised his eight years with the orchestra – phrases turned with fastidious care, textures exquisitely balanced. With all that consideration applied to wringing every last drop of meaning from the music, you might imagine it would sound calculated, overworked – but not a bit of it. Somehow he ensures



↑ Mitsuko Uchida's playing was thoughtful and commanding

it's as fresh and spontaneous as if he were discovering the pieces for the first time.

That magical balance was there in the opening Les francs-juges Overture, where Ticciati let Berlioz's wilful iconoclasm shine through in all its wit and surprising swerves of direction, and the

SCO players – gloriously radiant brass and timpanist Matthew Hardy on fine, assertive form – lapped it up. Mitsuko Uchida's modern Steinway sounded almost anachronistic against the sharply defined, brisk, semi-period orchestral backdrop Ticciati conjured for Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27, but she gave a thoughtful, quietly commanding account.

The evening's revelation, however, was Dvořák's Symphony No. 8, more often heard across the broader canvas of a full symphony orchestra, but tripping along with fleet-footed clarity under the SCO's smaller forces. It might not necessarily be the way you'd always want to hear Dvořák – there were passages where you missed the power and depth of a bigger band – but it was a bracing, quietly provocative account, as delicate as it was dramatic.

**DAVID KETTLE**

## **MUSIC**

### **BBC SSO/Kristóf Baráti**

City Halls, Glasgow

★★★

It's been a wonderful week for violin aficionados. First they had Nicola Benedetti, this