

Dundee Symphony Orchestra

Caird Hall, Dundee

What better date for Dundee Symphony Orchestra to choose to put on its winter concert than Saturday 22 November? It is the day that is dedicated to the patron saint of music, Saint Cecilia, and there is no doubt that she would have been justifiably proud of DSO's performance. Under the consistently clear yet inspiring direction of conductor Robert Dick, the orchestra tackled an ambitious programme head on. In the Caird Hall's spacious acoustic, the heartbeat of Mozart's *Symphony No 41 'Jupiter'* pulsed through its four movements, with thoughtful dynamic contrast and control. The string sound was warm and glowingly rich in tone, the sweet-sounding shimmering violins very much to the fore. If the *Menuetto* was on the slow side, it gave opportunity to hear more of the detail of Mozart's masterly score.

In Mahler's *Symphony No 5* it was time for the brass section to shine. The confident trumpet call that opens this mammoth piece – it is over an hour in length – set the bar for a well paced and emotionally charged performance. With Robert Dick's stylistically authoritative direction, Vienna of the early 1900s came to life with an assurance that rippled through every instrument of the huge orchestra. The *Adagietto* for harp and strings, made famous by its starring role in Visconti's *Death in Venice*, is achingly beautiful, but it was the blaze of colour and impassioned intensity of the full orchestra's playing that propelled the symphony towards its ultimately triumphant finale.

Carol Main