

ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA

Sergej KRYLOV, violin

Nikolaj ZNAIDER, conductor

28th Edinburgh | 29th Glasgow | 30th Aberdeen



The RSN0, Nikolaj Znaider and Sergej Krylov ****



It was quite a coup for the RSN0 to get starry international violin soloist Nikolaj Znaider to join them for a season concert – even if it was on the podium as conductor, rather than on his customary fiddle. In fairness, he’s been developing that second strand to his performing career for about a decade now, and he seemed in his element – perhaps not surprisingly – directing the evening’s centrepiece, Prokofiev’s Second Violin Concerto.

Znaider found just the right balance of sarcastic wit and grotesquerie for Prokofiev’s rather arch score, his orchestral textures sharply delineated with impeccable craftsmanship. The star of the Concerto, however, was Moscow-born soloist Sergej Krylov, who delivered it with such a sense of gruff, fiery truculence that he simply swept aside any doubts. He projected his line forcefully, and enunciated his phrases with chiselled clarity, even if it felt a bit like he was playing the whole thing through gritted teeth, even a rictus grin. Still, the breathtaking technique he showed in his encore of

Paganini’s 24th Caprice – what else? – brought the house down with its staggering pyrotechnics. Znaider brought the same impeccable craftsmanship to his Tchaikovsky Pathétique Symphony after the interval, and it was nothing if not a thoughtful, elegant account – even if it often fell frustratingly short on the raw emotional turmoil that the Symphony surely needs. Where was the trauma, and the tragedy? Znaider’s nonchalant reading at times sounded bizarrely like Haydn, and the RSN0 players didn’t seem all that convinced either. His brief Scriabin Rêverie made a captivating if strangely low-key opener.

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