

The CBSO at St David's Hall

An orchestra
in need
of precision

IN MANY ways, there are important parallels between Eduardo Mata and Simon Rattle.

Both are highly-touted conductors of the younger generation and both are leading the development of regional orchestras (Mata is with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra) with pretensions to higher things.

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra is being talked of as Britain's next super orchestra, and Rattle, its principal conductor, is considered as our most talented of younger conductors and is treated as a nascent superstar.

I seem to be in a very small minority, since my experience of the CBSO is that it is a competent regional orchestra but no more. And, personable

By IFAN PAYNE

and articulate though he may be, I seem never to have caught Rattle on a day when he presented more than an unexceptional interpretation.

Indeed the recent broadcast of Mahler's *Symphony No 6*, performed by Rattle and the CBSO, was at best pedestrian both in interpretation and execution.

It was intriguing, then, to hear Mata conduct the CBSO at St David's Hall last night.

Those who heard both this concert and that given by the lustrous Dresden Staatskapelle last Tuesday will need no telling by me that comparatively the Birmingham sound lacks precision and subtlety and is coarse-grained. The orchestra has a long way to go to rival Mata's own.

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