

audite

Ernest Bloch
SCHELOMO

Antonín Dvořák
CELLO CONCERTO
KLID 'Silent Woods'



MARC COPPEY

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin • Kirill Karabits

Ernest Bloch
SCHELOMO
Rhapsodie Hébraïque for
Violoncello & Orchestra 22:33

Antonín Dvořák
KLID (Silent Woods) *Adagio* 6:20

CELLO CONCERTO
in B minor, Op. 104

- I. *Allegro* 14:59
- II. *Adagio ma non troppo* 11:52
- III. *Finale (Allegro moderato)* 12:42

Marc Coppey, cello

**Deutsches Symphonie-
Orchester Berlin**

Kirill Karabits, conductor

For a great composer choosing to write a cello concerto means to focus on the specific expressive qualities of the solo instrument and the spectrum of sonorities it can produce. The cello is able to traverse all the registers, from profound depths to soaring heights, from intimate tenderness to vigorous exuberance. This sonic plasticity predestines the instrument for narrative and characterising roles, at times taking it to extinction: the cello dies in Strauss' »Don Quixote«, in Bloch's »Schelomo«, and it also expires in the codas of the concertos by Dvořák, Elgar and Walton – in the manner of a hero, exhausted at the end of his tale.

At first glance, Bloch and Dvořák seem to have nothing in common. On closer inspection, however, these two masterpieces for cello and orchestra appear as mirror images of one another.

Bloch composed »Schelomo« in Europe, shortly before emigrating to the United States (the work was to be premiered in New York), whilst Dvořák wrote his concerto in America, shortly before returning to Europe for good, when he probably revised it.

As Richard Strauss had done in »Don Quixote«, Ernest Bloch personifies the cello, giving it the main role of Schelomo. The instrument has to sing, speak and even chant in this lively work where intimacy and power coexist in a deeply original harmonic language.

Dvořák tended to write heroic, lyrical and at the same time virtuoso parts for the cello, which is in constant dialogue with the orchestra. One can listen to the concerto as a story evoking Dvořák's first love, Josefina, who died as he was working on the piece: her favourite song is quoted in it.

A work written in exile, the Cello Concerto by Dvořák represents the foil to the Symphony »From the New World«: it expresses the melancholy of a man missing his home and his loved ones, rather than the fascination of discovering America.

The third piece on this album, »Klid«, forges a connection between the reflections of an individual and the violence of being uprooted. Dvořák transcribed this short masterpiece, inspired by the depths of Bohemian forests, for the cello, on the occasion of his farewell tour before leaving for America.

Recording this emblematic repertoire for my instrument with one of the best European orchestras is a dream come true. I would like to thank the wonderful musicians of the DSO and Kirill Karabits, as well as Ludger Böckenhoff and the audite label for bringing us together.

Marc Coppey
Translation: Viola Scheffel

The Cello Concerto and its Satellites

Antonín Dvořák composed his first concerto immediately after his first symphony, and his last concerto shortly after his final symphony. Both concertos were conceived for cello and orchestra, both are involved with great love, its blossoming and its end. In early 1865 the 23-year-old Dvořák started giving private music lessons to Josefína and Anna Čermáková, the daughters of a Prague goldsmith. He fell in love with the older one, Josefína, then aged sixteen. She, however, did not reciprocate his feelings. He proceeded to marry her younger sister, Anna, in 1874: Josefína was to wed an influential politician, Count Kaunitz, in 1877. The families kept in touch with each other. The Dvořáks were given a servants' cottage on the Kaunitz country estate as a summer retreat which they frequented regularly even whilst they lived in the US, where the composer held the post of director of a private conservatory.

The first cello concerto was written at a time of infatuation and looming disappointment; Dvořák did not complete the orchestration. When the composer, thirty years later and still in America, worked on his second cello concerto, he and his wife received a message that Josefína was seriously ill. Dvořák consequently inserted into the slow movement a quote of one of his own songs which Josefína liked to sing – a song mourning a lost love. At the end of April 1895 Dvořák and his family left the US, returning to their home country, the completed score of the new concerto amongst their belongings. Josefína died on 27 May. Thereafter, the composer added an epilogue to his work, interlacing the quoted song with the initial motif of the opening movement, forming a pair of reminiscences. Thoughts and memories of Josefína Kaunicová, née Čermáková, influenced the form and material of Dvořák's op. 104, his final orchestral work without an explicitly programmatic background.

The song quote does not appear as a foreign body – the implantation only becomes noticeable if one is familiar with the original and the relevant section, for song-like passages stretch through the entire cello concerto. In the first movement Dvořák places a vocal theme alongside the rhythmically concise main idea which is developed at length at the beginning. In the orchestral introduction it replaces the gradually waning initial thought; in the first section with the solo instrument, a dancingly playful and virtuoso variant of the motto-like opening bars mediates between the two opposite factions. Overall, the first movement widens steadily, providing increasing space for musical ideas to develop and transform, sometimes also changing character. The main theme appears resolute, splendid and dance-like, but then also in a *cantabile* version. The aim of this process is to present it in its most radiant and glorious form, moving, after various tonal and harmonic outfits, into a bright major key. It has previous history: it is derived from the theme of the finale of his symphony "From the New World". The main work of his American period (the symphony) and the composition with which he bade farewell to the US (the concerto) are thus linked to one another through variants of the same idea.

Way beyond Dvořák's era there was an unwritten consensus that cello concertos should have a lyrical and melodic conception, as it was felt that the instrument was not self-assertive enough to withstand dramatic conflicts. Even if Dvořák complied with these considerations in principle, he nonetheless declared his objections with his first theme and its energetic, sometimes march-like, rhythms. It dominates the majority of the first movement – opening it softly, providing formal caesuras in the manner of a "grandioso" beacon, and bringing it to a glori-

ous close – and thus emphasises the power of contrasts in music, engaging critically with genre traditions. And yet Dvořák was a master of melodic invention – Johannes Brahms envied him for that. The following movements demonstrate this side of his creativity. The “Adagio ma non troppo” opens as a solemn song without words whose main line is shared by the woodwind and the protagonist engaged in a form of dialogue. Before Josefina’s song is performed for the first time by the solo cello with clarinet accompaniment, a fierce minor-key passage terminates the memory of the opening bars. “Leave me alone! Do not banish the peace in my bosom with your loud words!” – Dvořák’s tune to these words defines, richly decorated and with a duet-like accompaniment, the extended central section of the slow movement in two emotional waves.

Dvořák conceived the finale – in keeping with traditional concerto forms – as a dance scene, put in motion like a flywheel by the introduction. The rondo subject, which, like a ritornello, reappears repeatedly, is cast in the virtuoso vernacular without quoting directly. The episodes with which it alternates, though elaborately crafted, are embedded in the same idiom. The epilogue which Dvořák added after the death of his sister-in-law does not appear as an appendix or a supplement, for previously in that movement the composer had already diminished the sense of élan in favour of a calmer secondary idea. Thereafter, it takes a fair while until the main theme progresses beyond its incipient stages. Its rotating motion finally leads into the motto of the opening movement which, in turn, evokes the Josefina theme. This double reminiscence seems dream-like. The final climax appears to wipe away these wistful memories with one *coup de main*; however, its emphatic major-key character and its sense of bravura do not quite manage to disperse the minor inflections. Brahms admired this ingenious synthesis of classical form, personal idiom and the mastery of keeping a rousing balance between élan and emotion.

“Silent Woods”

“Klid” (Silent Woods) was originally the fifth piece of Dvořák’s Op. 68 set of piano duets, “From the Bohemian Forest”. Prior to his departure to the US, he went on a long farewell tour from 3 January until 29 May 1892 with the violinist Ferdinand Lachner and the cellist Hanuš Wihan (to whom Dvořák would later dedicate the cello concerto), for which he arranged the “Song without Words” for cello and piano. This version of the piece soon became popular, leading Dvořák to create another arrangement in October 1893 when he was already in America. This latest rendering was conceived for cello and small orchestra: a wonderfully restrained encore, exchanging brilliance for expressivity; the progression from monologue to dialogue becomes particularly apparent in the orchestral version.

The Singer and Admonisher Solomon

The genesis of “Schelomo: Rhapsodie Hébraïque for Violoncello and Orchestra” was recounted by its composer, Ernest Bloch, as follows: “Towards the end of 1915, I was in Geneva. For years I had been sketching a musical setting of the *Book of Ecclesiastes*, but neither French, German, nor English suited my purpose and I did not know enough Hebrew. Consequently, the sketches accumulated and slept. One day I met the cellist Alexander Barjansky and his wife. [...] I played him my manuscript works [...]. The Barjanskys were profoundly moved. [...] My hopes revived and I began to think about writing a work for that marvellous cellist. Why not use my *Ecclesiastes* material, but instead of a human voice,

limited by a text, employ an infinitely grander and more profound voice that could speak all languages – that of his violoncello? I took up my sketches, and without plan or program, almost without knowing where I was headed, I worked for days on my rhapsody. [...] In a few weeks my *Ecclesiastes* was completed, and since the legend attributes this book to King Solomon, I gave it the title *Schelomo*.”

Ecclesiastes is a book of admonition. It opens and closes with the insight that all “is vanity” if one misses the essential. The author was a sage who wrote “words of wisdom. The words of the wise are as goads and as nails.” “*Schelomo*” is the only piece in Bloch’s oeuvre to have a dark ending. It was written in the middle of a war when Europe’s young men were sent into the trenches at the Somme and near Verdun in order to kill their kind for the sake of their nationalities.

Bloch was familiar with Richard Strauss’ Symphonic Poems and their thematic characters, metamorphoses, confrontations; he also knew the works of French contemporaries and their sense of colour, pictorial impression and their predilection for exotic, oriental sounds. Both lines are united in his “Hebrew Rhapsody” – at a time when the political landscape in Europe had made them oppose each other. The work was premiered in the USA. In the programme note which he wrote for a performance in Rome in 1933 (the only one he conducted himself), Bloch argued in the interests of Symphonic Poems and their content-related aesthetics. The solo part should be imagined as the voice of Solomon; the orchestra, on the other hand, as “the voice of his age, his world, his experience”. The introduction, which outlines the compendium of musical ideas, encompasses the king’s lament, the first cadenza of the soloist developing it into a great monologue. The intensification, which finally presents the main theme in all its might and in the splendour of the full orchestra, was linked to royal life at the palace: wealth, eroticism and all the charms of the orient were reflected here. However, the composer pointed out that doubts remained which no “seductive dance”, no sonic “tumult” and no “barbaric glory” could dispel or drown out. The great solo from the beginning, the king’s lament, symbolically returns in the middle of the piece.

Bloch emphasised that the Jewish character of works such as “*Schelomo*” was not achieved by using ancient melodies: “It is the Jewish soul that interests me [...], the freshness and naïveté of the Patriarchs, the violence of the prophetic books; the Jew savage love of justice; the despair of *Ecclesiastes*.” However, the links between his rhapsody and traditional Jewish music are closer than the composer implies. The calling motif with its fast repeated notes and the characteristic interval leap, introduced, after the first major climax, by the bassoon, followed by the oboe and then the entire orchestra, is reminiscent of the sound of the shofar, the ram’s horn, which was blown in synagogue services to mark high holy days such as Jewish New Year or the end of Yom Kippur. Bloch related that he had heard the melody from his father who had sung it with Hebrew words, but that he did not know the meaning of these words. The unremitting rhythmic flow in this work is reminiscent of liturgical singing in synagogues, the succinct use of particular intervals – especially the semitone and the fourth – and the reinterpretation of particular notes of the scale correspond to characteristics of traditional Jewish music of the diaspora.

Habakuk Traber
Translation: Viola Scheffel

MARC COPPEY

French cellist Marc Coppey, winner of the Bach Competition Leipzig at the age of eighteen (First Prize and Special Prize for the best interpretation of Bach), is considered one of today's leading cellists. Early on Sir Yehudi Menuhin discovered his talent and subsequently invited him to make his Moscow and Paris debuts performing together with him and Viktoria Postnikova. In 1989, Mstislav Rostropovitch invited Marc Coppey to the Evian Festival and from there his solo career took off.

A frequent soloist with leading orchestras, Marc Coppey has collaborated with distinguished conductors such as Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Alan Gilbert, Lionel Bringuier, Eliahu Inbal, Emmanuel Krivine, Yutaka Sado and Yan Pascal Tortelier, to name but a few. He has appeared in numerous recitals in Europe, North and South America and Asia in prestigious concert halls such as Wigmore Hall in London, the Schauspielhaus in Berlin, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Salle Pleyel, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Philharmonie in Paris, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory in Moscow and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. He is a regular guest at festivals including those of Radio-France-Montpellier, Strasbourg, Besançon, La Roque d'Anthéron, Monte-Carlo, the Nantes and Lisbon "Folle Journée", Bachfest Leipzig, Musikfest Stuttgart, Chamber Music Festival Kuhmo and the Pablo Casals Festival at Prades.

An avid chamber music player, Marc Coppey has explored and performed the cello repertoire with renowned artists, among them Maria João Pires, Stephen Kovacevich, Nicholas Angelich, Michel Béroff, Kun-Woo Paik, Peter Laul, Augustin Dumay, Viktoria Mullova, Valeriy Sokolov, Alina Pogostkina, Ilya Gringolts, János Starker, Paul Meyer, Emmanuel Pahud and the Tokyo, Takács, Pražák, Ébène and Talich Quartets. From 1995 to 2000 he was a member of the Ysaÿe Quartet.

Marc Coppey's choice of repertoire is eclectic and innovative. He frequently plays the complete Bach Suites and other well-known concert repertoire, but also works that are rarely heard. Performing and promoting contemporary music is very important to him: he is the dedicatee of several contemporary works and he played the world premieres of the Cello Concertos by Lenot, Tanguy and Monnet as well as the French and Spanish premieres of Elliott Carter's Cello Concerto. As a tribute to Pierre Boulez, he premiered ten works for solo cello by some of today's most prominent composers at the Philharmonie de Paris in March 2015.

Marc Coppey's recordings have received critical acclaim worldwide. They include works by Beethoven, Debussy, Emmanuel, Fauré, Grieg, Strauss, Dubois, Bach, Dohnányi, Matalon and Dutilleux. Together with the Pražák Quartet, Marc Coppey has recorded the Schubert Quintet and with pianist Peter Laul the Brahms Cello Sonatas, Russian Cello Sonatas and a Schubert album.

His audite debut recording with Haydn and C.P.E. Bach Cello Concertos (aud. 97.716) was released in 2016, raising international attention. Following the current Bloch/Dvořák release, Beethoven's complete works for Cello and Piano (5 Sonatas, 3 Variations) with pianist Peter Laul are scheduled for release at audite in fall 2017.

Arte TV broadcast his full-length live performance of the complete Bach Suites from the Chapelle de la Trinité, Lyon.

In addition to his solo career and his chamber music activities, Marc Coppey is Professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and gives master-classes across the globe. He is artistic director of the Colmar Chamber Music Festival as well as the Zagreb Soloists.

Marc Coppey was born in Strasbourg, France. He studied cello at the conservatory of his home town, continued at the Paris Conservatoire and at Indiana University in Bloomington, USA. Today he resides in Paris. He was made Officier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Culture Ministry in 2014.

Marc Coppey performs on a rare cello by Matteo Goffriller (Venice, 1711), the «Van Wilgenburg».



DEUTSCHES SYMPHONIE-ORCHESTER BERLIN

For 70 years the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (DSO Berlin) has distinguished itself as one of Germany's leading orchestras. The number of renowned music directors, the scope and variety of its work, and its particular emphasis on modern and contemporary music, makes the ensemble unique. Founded as the RIAS Symphony Orchestra in 1946, it was renamed the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin in 1956 and has borne its current name since 1993.

As the first music director, Ferenc Fricsay defined the standards in terms of repertoire, acoustic ideal and media presence. In 1964, the young Lorin Maazel assumed artistic responsibility. In 1982, he was followed by Riccardo Chailly and in 1989 by Vladimir Askenazy. Kent Nagano was appointed music director in 2000. Since his departure in 2006, he has been associated with the orchestra as an honorary conductor. From 2007 to 2010, as the successor to Nagano, Ingo Metzmacher set decisive accents in the concert life of the capital with progressive programmes and consistent commitment to the music of the 20th and 21st centuries. Since September 2012, the North Ossetian Tugan Sokhiev has been music director of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin; his successor Robin Ticciati will take on the position starting with the season of 2017-18.

Apart from its concerts in Berlin, the DSO is also present in many guest appearances in international music life. The orchestra has held performances in the major concert halls of Europe, North and South America, the Near, Middle and Far East. The DSO is also in demand worldwide with many award-winning CD recordings. In 2011, it was awarded a Grammy Award for the best opera recording for the production of Kaija Saariaho's ›L'amour de loin‹ conducted by Kent Nagano.

The Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin is an ensemble of the Radio Orchestra and Choirs GmbH (roc berlin). The shareholders are Deutschlandradio, the Federal Republic of Germany, the State of Berlin and Radio Berlin-Brandenburg.

KIRILL KARABITS

Since 2008, Ukrainian-born Kirill Karabits has held the position of Chief Conductor of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. In addition, since September 2016 he assumes the position of General Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Deutsches Nationaltheater and Staatskapelle Weimar.

Kirill Karabits has worked with many of the leading ensembles of Europe, Asia and North America, including the Cleveland, Philadelphia and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras, Philharmonia Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Filarmonica del Teatro La Fenice, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the Münchner Philharmoniker. In 2016, he conducted the Russian National Orchestra on their tour of the US and in two concerts at the Edinburgh International Festival. Summer 2016 also saw his debut with the Chicago Symphony at the Ravinia Festival. A prolific opera conductor, Kirill Karabits has conducted at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, English National Opera and the Bolshoi Theatre. He also conducted at the Wagner Geneva Festival, and recently returned to the Staatsoper Hamburg. The 2016-17 season will see his debuts at both the Deutsche Oper and the Oper Stuttgart.

Working with the next generation of bright musicians is of great importance to Kirill Karabits. Thus he commits himself as Artistic Director of I, CULTURE Orchestra, an orchestra of talented, young musicians from Poland and other East European countries. In 2012 and 2014 he conducted the televised finals of the BBC Young Musician of the Year Award.

In recognition of his achievements in the UK, Kirill Karabits was named Conductor of the Year at the 2013 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards.

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Deutsches
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