



writing and repetition often prevail over true development. The soloist often plays the role of mediator, introducing lyrical themes that contrast with the more discursive writing of the orchestra.

Roel Dieltiens and the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century convey the hyperactivity of much of this music, albeit a touch more laid-back – and in a more generous acoustic – than Nicolas Altstaedt with Arcangelo (Hyperion CDA68112), to cite a recent competitor. Dieltiens's contemporary instrument exhibits a grainier tone than Altstaedt's, and Glossa's microphones focus on its treble sonorities at the slight expense of a richer, more tenorial sound.

DAVID THREASHER

BEN-HAIM Cello Concerto (1962)

BLOCH Symphony for Cello and Orchestra (1954); Vidui and Nigun from Baal Shem-Suite **KORNGOLD** Concerto in C major in one movement; Tanzlied des Pierrot

Raphael Wallfisch (cello) BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Łukasz Borowicz

CPO 555 273-2

Plenty of gold to be mined here in an enterprising collection of concertos

Raphael Wallfisch's enterprising series for CPO has showcased a considerable number of neglected cello concertos by émigré Jewish composers. Perhaps the most high-profile and stylistically defined of those featured here is Korngold. His Concerto, written at a time when his star had been burning brightly in Hollywood, was originally created for the Warner Brothers film *Deception* starring Bette Davis, and this reworking of the material reflects the emotional turbulence of the story's love triangle. Wallfisch and the BBC

NOW provide a carefully rehearsed and compelling rendition, with an evocative delivery of the strikingly lyrical second theme. The golden hues of nostalgia also grace the other contribution from Korngold in the shape of the 'Tanzlied' from his opera *Die tote Stadt*. Again a gloriously soaring theme allows the cello to glow.

Paul Ben-Haim's Concerto is likewise treated to a meticulously prepared interpretation. The work opens with strong rhythmic material, and this feature is also present in the exciting and highly charged Finale, a movement enlivened with strong hints of Orientalism. Although the composer's musical language is direct and fluent there is a tendency, particularly in the central Sostenuuto, for the melismatic ideas to lack a sense of direction. Furthermore, the close-miked recording diminishes the dynamic range and this possibly does such works a disservice.

Bloch's contribution is also a mixed bag. The Symphony for Cello lacks distinctive material, although the central Agitato in this three-movement work achieves some degree of intensity. Nonetheless, it is in Bloch's religiously oriented works



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where the composer's inspiration feels strongest, and here Wallfisch provides a richly powerful delivery of 'Nigun'.

JOANNE TALBOT

★ **BEETHOVEN** Complete

Cello Sonatas and Variations

Ori Epstein (cello) Omri Epstein (piano)

LINN CKD627 (2CD)

Serious, rigorous performances from siblings stand up with the finest

Anyone following the series of Dvořák piano trio recordings from the Busch Trio on Alpha will know what to expect from the ensemble's sibling cellist and pianist: articulate playing that's in hock to no particular performance tradition but which speaks with direct and unaffected eloquence. Such virtues are especially valuable in the expansive – not to say grandiose, even rambling – early sonatas, where even the most distinguished duos may lose momentum and direction. Not the Epsteins, and their readings are complemented here by a recording that's as lucid as their musicianship.

I love how the Bachian rigour of op.5 no.2's finale is counterbalanced



Lucid playing from musical brothers Ori and Omri Epstein