

The SCO & Kristian Bezuidenhout

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

★★★★★

Beethoven's Triple Concerto is sometimes seen as one of the composer's lesser works.

Not that you'd know it from the vivid, brightly etched account given by pianist Kristian Bezuidenhout and two of the SCO's principals, violinist Benjamin Marquise Gilmore and cellist Philip Higham. OK, the piece might not have the intensity of emotion or the dogged working over of themes and motifs of Beethoven's symphonies, but between them Bezuidenhout, Marquise Gilmore and Higham fully captured the concerto's disarming charm, its unstoppable flow of melody, its drama and its pathos.

It was a remarkably generous, open performance, one that didn't attempt to dig into the music to unearth undiscovered profundities but celebrated Beethoven's delightful creation in its own terms, and was all the more moving

as a result. At the other end of the emotional spectrum, Bezuidenhout, pictured, was on harpsichord to direct an appropriately turbulent, volatile account of Haydn's outlandish Symphony No52, with the SCO players on particularly fine form in its stuttering themes and ungainly accents. If this was music to disconcert, which seemed Haydn's intention, then Bezuidenhout's fiery account succeeded magnificently.



He ended the concert with a grand, expansive reading of Mozart's Prague Symphony, full of bustling energy in its outer movements and nicely brisk in its slithering central Andante. Most impressive, however, was his teasing apart of its layers, his almost forensic dissection of Mozart's many transformations of his material, all the while maintaining a smiling, light-hearted buoyancy. The capacity audience lapped it up, quite understandably.

DAVID KETTLE