



**Marc Coppey & The Zagreb Soloists:
Cello Concertos by J. Haydn and C. P.
E. Bach**

aud 97.716

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Gramophone (Charlotte Gardner - 2016.03.01)

GRAMOPHONE

There are so very many recordings of Haydn's two cello concertos, both recent and older, that any cellist who dares to add their own contribution to the pile must find it almost impossible to do so without the disturbing mental image of a chorus of critics demanding that they explain themselves. It can't be easy, and I must admit to mixed feelings myself when a new one lands on my desk; on the one hand there's pleasure, as no amount of listening can weary me of these jewels of the cello repertoire, but there's also an element of trepidation. Will the hours to come leave me delighted afresh or merely inspired to go scuttling back to previous favourites once the review is written?

As it happens, Marc Coppey and the Zagreb Soloists have left me somewhere betwixt and between with this recording, but more as a result of the third concerto on the disc, CPE Bach's slightly earlier A major Cello Concerto, than because of the two Haydn concertos, which are in fact hugely enjoyable. Let's take the Haydn pair first, these are elegant, winsomely tender performances, Coppey's beautifully spun long lines accentuated further by his comparatively legato delivery and singing tone. The virtuosity never feels forced either, helped by the infallible, bang-on accuracy of his intonation and articulation. Moving on to the Bach, all those same qualities are there to be enjoyed in Coppey's playing, matched by a crisp, glowing, joyful performance from the orchestra, and yet Bach's music is capable of more dancing lightness than we hear from the cello here.

An element of this sturdiness no doubt springs in part from the amalgam of 'historically informed' and modern performance practices used: we're at modern pitch (A=442kHz), Coppey is playing his 1711 gut-strung Matteo Goffriller with a modern bow, while the orchestra are on gut-strung modern instruments but using natural horns. Still, I suspect it's largely down to Coppey, and in fact the recording's overall balance and blend are very satisfying, helped further by the subtly supportive acoustic of Zagreb's Lisinsku Small Hall.