

MUSIC

The SCO, Alexandre Bloch and Jean-Guihen Queyras

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh



Young French conductor Alexandre Bloch is fast developing rather a special relationship with the SCO. He'd only conducted the band a handful of times before this eager, exuberant and often downright euphoric Beethoven Eroica, but they're clearly already on one another's wavelengths. So much so that Bloch's expansive, energetic conducting sometimes felt more like elaborate choreography

to the SCO's playing. It was a big-hearted, bold and bright account of the Beethoven Symphony, one that surged ever forwards under Bloch's exuberant direction – which occasionally strayed a bit close to being mannered. But he articulated and balanced everything with care, too. Indeed, he has a bit of a thing for sonic texture – some of his sounds were so vivid you could almost touch them – and not a single one of the Symphony's many notes felt less than crucial. No wonder there was a roar of appreciation at the end.

No less appreciated was Bloch's compatriot Jean-Guihen Queyras, in a sharply

etched Haydn C major Cello Concerto, delivered with such suppleness and precision that it sometimes felt he was playing a viola da gamba. His speeds were on the restrained side, but that only served to highlight the detail of his playing. His encore – the Prelude from Bach's Third Cello Suite – had the audience hanging on his every note.

Bloch's opener, too – the polystylistic and thoroughly likeable Baroque Song by contemporary French composer Thierry Escaich – was an ideal vehicle for his wit and total conviction. It's a relationship to watch closely.

DAVID KETTLE



↑ Alexandre Bloch's conducting is often downright euphoric