

3.30 p.m., Sunday 15 September 2024

Curtis Auditorium, MTU Cork School of Music

Cork2020sHaydnSymphoniesSeries 4/iv

Cork Haydn Orchestra

Leader: Lesya Iglody

Conductor: Geoffrey Spratt



Haydn Hall of Esterházy Castle, Eisenstadt

Programme notes

Symphony No. 21 in A (c. 1764)

Adagio; Presto; *Menuet – Trio*; *Finale*: Allegro molto

It is relatively unusual for Haydn to commence a symphony with a slow movement (the precedents are Nos 18, 5 and 11), and the only later works are Nos 22 (“Der Philosoph”, which we will perform for you next month), 34 and 49 (“La passione”). He did, however, begin a number of first movements with a slow introduction (Nos 6, 7, 15 and 25) before this became the norm in the late symphonies (17 of Nos 82-104). The second movement features a “mirror” recapitulation – the opening material does not return at the beginning of the recapitulation, but is transplanted to the end as a coda – unusual for both a work of Haydn’s and a Classical symphony. The first eight notes of the *Menuet* were used verbatim by Mozart for the *Menuetto* of his *Serenade in G*, KV 525 (“Eine Kleine Nachtmusik”), and the *Trio* is characterised by sparse instrumental scoring and minimal melodic material.

Symphony No. 29 in E (1765)

Allegro ma non troppo; Andante; *Menuet – Trio*; *Finale*: Presto

The key of E major is one of particular radiance for Haydn in his vocal works (including *The Creation*), string quartets, and piano trios, as well as one of the orchestral *Scherzandi* and Symphony No. 12. Two of the movements in this symphony are distinctive: in the Andante, the melody is passed back and forth between the first and second violin parts, and the *Trio* of the *Menuet* has an “oom-pah-pah” accompaniment in the strings, with the horns sustaining tonic and dominant pedal points, but no apparent melody. H. C. Robbins Landon notes the ‘weird atmosphere’ due to the lack of melody, but says it has a ‘sombre and secretive beauty’ and a ‘strongly Balkan’ character. For his recording from the 1950s with the Vienna Academy Chamber Orchestra, Wilhelm Loaner’s harpsichordist provided the outline of a melody – a convincing example of improvisation which suits the music well – but conductors including Doráti, Fischer, Hogwood, Jones and Ward do not embrace even this approach. For today’s performance, the oboe players will “decorate” the repeats; regardless, arguably more distinctive are the || : 5+5 : || : 6+4+6 : || phrase structure and how pedal points underpin the harmonic flexing.

Symphony No. 46 in B (1772)

Vivace; Poco adagio; *Menuet – Trio*; Allegretto; *Finale*: Presto e scherzando

The key of B major is highly unusual for the Classical period, and the prevailing mood of this homotonal work is one of unease, restlessness and searching. The first movement’s opening unison four-note motif is developed in various keys – some quite remote - with frequent use of minor modes. In a deliberate ‘surprise’, the movement seems to enter the recapitulation just after the development begins, before jumping back to dramatic development processes.

The second movement, in B minor, is a rhapsodic pastorale (very like an Italian *siciliano*), which rocks along over a running figure in the bass, with a syncopated figure in the muted violins maintaining the tension.

The *Minuet* is more assertive in tone, but its confidence is undermined by a plaintive, almost solemn, *Trio*, again in B minor. The trio is "tuneless", similar to the Trio of the minuet in Symphony No. 29, but unlike the latter, the phrasing is symmetrical and regular, and all the wind players make annotated contributions in the second half.

Many of Haydn's symphonies contain startling surprises, and here it comes in the final movement. The opening is a typical energetic theme in the violins which is rapidly taken up and developed, with the horns prominent. The music rushes on only to break off suddenly, interrupted by the closing passage of the *Minuet*, followed by the repeat of the whole of the second half of the *Minuet*. The horns then burst in again with the main finale theme, but fade away and the music stutters almost to a halt. Then, on an underlying pedal on the horns, the strings take the movement and symphony to a rapid and abrupt close. Although it is not known if he was familiar with this symphony, Beethoven would later do the same thing in the finale of his Symphony No. 5.

In Haydn's time, this symphony required the use of horns crooked in B natural. In many recordings, the players read their parts as if for horns in B *alto* rather than B *basso*. Although there is a degree of uncertainty about which octave the composer wanted, strong evidence from within the score indicates *basso*. In the essay (The editions we are using for our performances) for the February 2024 programme, it was noted that Robbins Landon, who was responsible for the urtext editions published by Doblinger (Nos 1-50) and Universal Edition (51-104) during the 1950s and 1960s, made the dubious decision to label *all* the horns parts as "alto", unless otherwise indicated. Horn players since the time of Bach, Handel and Vivaldi had been playing their parts down at least an octave from written pitch, as per instructions from these composers. Writing at least one octave higher than the intended pitch was a notational convention which helped composers avoid changing clefs and having to use ledger lines. A careful analysis of the parts in this symphony clearly demonstrates that Haydn intended B *basso* – i.e. parts sounding a minor ninth lower than written.

Next concert: Sunday 20 October 2024 - Symphonies Nos 22 in E^b ("The Philosopher") and No. 52 in c

The orchestra

Violin 1

Lesya Iglody
Richéal Ní Riordáin
Caitríona O'Mahony
Cillian Ó Cathasaigh
Caoimhe Browne
Nuala Ní Chanainn

Violin 2

Eithne Willis
Carol Daly
Áine Ní Shé
Seán Looney
Katie Sheehan
Selena McCarthy
Brefni Burke

Viola

Ciara Moloney
Irina Riedewald
Hilda Leader-Galvin
Cian Rae Adams Gibson

Cello

Sharon Nye
Hugh McCarthy
Grace Coughlan
Gerda Marwood

Double Bass

Stéphane Petiet

Oboes

Coral O'Sullivan
Catherine Kelly

Bassoon

Brian Prendergast

Horns

Shane O'Sullivan
Stephen Crowley

Harpichord

James Taylor

Orchestra Manager & Social media co-ordinator: Ciara Moloney Programme editor: Niamh Murray
Front-of-house team: Margaret Crowley, Margaret Murphy, Liz Spratt



Sincere thanks to the
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ackhurst on Haydn – the first of two essays



(The second essay will feature in the programme for the next concert, 20 October 2024)

The blog sphere is awash with comments about Haydn's symphonies, particularly arising from the recordings that have been issued over the last thirty years. The majority of comments are at best ill-informed, and at worst depressingly ignorant. One lady, Elaine Blackhurst, frequently attempts to correct factual errors and enlighten those who post comments in the electronic media that lack even basic moderation, let alone the quality control characteristics of printed material. What follows are some of her postings – the expression is direct, facts are accurate, and the perspectives illuminating.

The 'Father [of the symphony] ...' bit simply does not stand up to scrutiny with Haydn and has become little more than meaningless, misleading clickbait, in fact it's fake news, or disinformation if you like. The first symphonies appeared c.1740 whilst Haydn was an eight-year-old choirboy in St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna (i.e. fathering nothing), a father by definition must be involved at the conception, but unfortunately for all the 'Father of the Symphony' nonsense, he didn't manage his first one until 1757 when the form was already a troublesome late-teenager. If interested in the origins of the early Classical symphony, then the following composers are a more factually-based place to start: Sammartini in Milan Johann Stamitz, Holzbauer, Fils, and Richter in Mannheim, Wagenseil and Monn in Vienna. Hope that's helpful to yourself and anyone else passing by; Haydn's role in relation to the string quartet can be disposed of similarly, though it is true in this case that - unlike the symphony - there are almost no great modern string quartets that pre-date Haydn. Johann Stamitz died in 1757 - the year of Haydn's Symphony No. 1 - having composed about sixty modern Classical symphonies, many in four movements, some even with clarinets; this example of Stamitz alone illustrates and exposes the complete absurdity of so-called sources like Austria info peddling this utter fictional nonsense of attributing a title to Haydn that in fact should be given to no one composer at all, and definitely not Haydn.

Regarding the dating of Haydn's symphonies

Many older books - even relatively recent ones - still have a number of discrepancies over the dating of individual works, a problem that can never be fully resolved because the original manuscripts no longer exist. On a number of occasions throughout his life, Haydn was subject to some serious incendiary incidents one way or another, and this accounts for many

of the missing scores. The most important in terms of manuscripts was probably the fire at Esterházy in 1779 which destroyed much of what he had composed - originals, copies, orchestral parts for example - from his appointment to the family in 1761 up to that date. The arrival of the Soviet army in 1945 at the end of World War 2 did for much of the rest - including a very early portrait of Haydn in a powder-blue uniform – as the soldiers cleared the palace and made a bonfire of the contents that lasted for days. In short, the correct chronology can only be at best guesswork - the key modern study is by Sonja Gerlach (*Joseph Haydns Sinfonien bis 1774. Studien zur Chronologie*, Henle, Munich, 1996) - but we are probably better informed today than at any time previously, even Haydn's own time.

The familiar Mandyczewski/Hoboken list of 104 symphonies is far from chronological, and not only concerning the early works; both the 'Paris' symphonies (82-87), and the first set for London (93-98), unfortunately, are hopelessly muddled - they should be correctly: for Paris - 87, 85, 83, 84, 86, 82; for London (first set) - 96, 95, 93, 94, 98, (then the *Sinfonia Concertante*), 97. (Note this makes far more sense: like Mozart's 39, 40, 41, each of Haydn's sets contain one minor key work, and ends with a big-scale C major work. Michael Haydn's set of six symphonies 34-39 (Perger 26-31) written during just seven weeks in 1788 - a few months before Mozart's last three - also ends with the C major work. .. with a fugal finale!).

Music in Vienna in the 1740s and '50s.

As a chorister in St Stephen's Cathedral, together with the required performances at the Habsburg court, it is clear that Haydn was familiar with a wide range of both old and new music. Masses and motets by Palestrina were common, as was Allegri's famous *Miserere*; there was music by Alessandro Scarlatti, Caldara, Fux, Hasse, and instrumental works by more modern composers such as Wagenseil, and Monn. Prior to writing his own Symphony No. 1 in 1757, it is likely that Haydn would have heard, studied and played symphonies and other works by Sammartini, Stamitz, Holzbauer, Richter, Fils, Ordonez, Wagenseil, Monn, Gassman, et al. In opera, Galuppi and Gluck were two of the best-paid and most popular of composers. In summary, I think the young Haydn would have heard works from Italy, Mannheim, Vienna, and elsewhere.