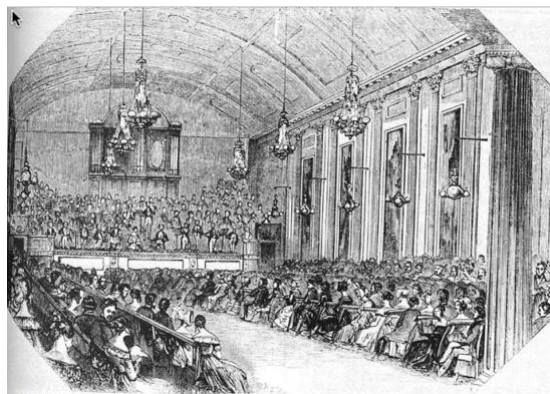


3.30 p.m., Sunday 10 March 2024
Curtis Auditorium, MTU Cork School of Music

CORK2020sHAYDN SYMPHONIES SERIES 4/iii

Cork Haydn Orchestra
Leader: Lesya Iglody
Conductor: Geoffrey Spratt



The Hanover Square Rooms, from the Illustrated London News

Programme notes

Symphony No. 11 in E^b major (? 1760-62)

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

This symphony may have been written as early as 1760, but no later than 1762, which means it could have been written for the orchestra of either Count Morzin or Prince Paul II Anton of Esterházy. It is a possible companion piece to his Symphony No. 5 in that the two symphonies are in *sonata da chiesa* form, with finales that are not in the customary (for the time period) 3/8 meter. It has been conjectured that both works might have been conceived for performance in Count Morzin's chapel at Lukavec in Bohemia, but no proof has been found. In the trio of the minuet, one of the parts is a quaver behind the others, creating an effect of limping syncopation. The oboes do not play in the first movement, and the horn parts were revised significantly by Haydn, and we are fortunate to have the evidence of the improvements, in his own hand, in the Fürnberg-Morzin manuscripts that were found in Keszthely Castle shortly after the end of World War II.

Symphony No. 98 in B^b (1792)

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

When Haydn composed this symphony in early 1792 he was in the middle of the first of his two visits to London, under contract to perform a series of new symphonies with an orchestra led by Johann Peter Salomon. The symphony was performed on 2 March 1792 at the Hanover Square Rooms, with Haydn directing the orchestra from the keyboard. The première came two weeks after that of the Symphony No. 93, and one week before that of the *Sinfonia concertante*. Haydn recalled that at the première of the No. 98, the first and fourth movements were encored.

This is the first work by Haydn that requires trumpets and drums in the key of B flat major. Haydn must have been pleased with the result because he went on to write for these instruments in this key in a number of subsequent works – the *Sinfonia concertante*, Symphony No. 102, four of his late Mass settings, and both *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.

At the symphony's first performance, according to the composer and organist Samuel Wesley, Haydn played the "cembalo" part on a fortepiano. The "cembalo" part consists of only a brief solo in the fourth movement, but Haydn would have conducted the première sitting at the keyboard and probably used it in a continuo role throughout the whole of the symphony.

The first movement is distinguished by the fact that the principal idea of the slow introduction, in the minor mode, is recast in the major mode as the principal melodic material for the subsequent sonata form Allegro. The two quotations from works by Mozart in the slow movement suggest this was intended by Haydn as a tribute to his friend and fellow-composer (who died in December 1791 while he was composing this symphony) because he was recorded as being greatly distressed by the news of his friend's death. The movement's principal theme, played by the strings and marked "cantabile", is an almost exact quotation from the Agnus Dei of Mozart's "Coronation" *Mass in C*, KV 317 (1779). (Haydn went on to use the same quotation in the Agnus Dei of his own *Harmoniemesse* (1802), and the scoring reflects that of the Adagio of this symphony.). In the transition section from the exposition to the development Haydn also quotes material from Mozart's *Symphony No. 41* ("Jupiter"), KV 551 (1788). The chromaticism accompanying the final statement of the principal theme was suppressed in published editions of the symphony until the 1950s, when H. C. Robbins Landon restored Haydn's original score.

The fourth movement, in sonata form and 6/8 time, is the longest finale to be found in Haydn's symphonies. Haydn exploits dramatic and abrupt key changes, modulates through a wide range of keys in the development, and includes prominent solos for the leader. After the recapitulation there is a lengthy coda, in which Haydn slows the tempo to "più moderato" but then introduces semiquavers to give the movement a new momentum. Towards the end of the coda comes the surprising keyboard solo, consisting of an 11-bar passage of semiquavers. Haydn was not a keyboard virtuoso, but the composer and organist Samuel Wesley, who was at the 1792 première, recollected that Haydn had executed the keyboard solo proficiently: 'His Performance on the Piano Forte, although not such as to stamp him a first rate artist upon that Instrument, was indisputably neat and distinct. In the Finale of one of his Symphonies is a Passage of attractive Brilliancy, which he has given to the Piano Forte, and which the Writer of this Memoir remembers him to have executed with the utmost Accuracy and Precision.'

The next concert: Sunday 15 September 2024 (stc), Symphonies Nos 46, 29 & 21

The orchestra

Violin 1

Lesya Iglody
Rícheal Ní Ríordáin
Michael Cummins
Nuala Ní Chanainn
Caitriona O'Mahony
Kseniia Yershova

Violin 2

Eithne Willis
Aoileann Ní Dhúill
Áine Ní Shé
Helen McGrath
Seán Looney

Viola

Constantin Zanidache
Hilda Leader-Galvin
Irina Riedewald
Cian Adams

Cello

Hugh McCarthy
Sharon Nye
Órla Nic Athlaoich
Gerda Marwood
Carol O'Connor

Double Bass

Michael Riordan

Harpichord/Fortepiano

James Taylor

Trumpets

Ruairí Dineen
John Morgan

Flute

Maria Mulcahy

Oboe

Coral O'Sullivan
Catherine Kelly

Bassoon

Brian Prendergast
Michael Sexton

Horn

Shane O'Sullivan
Stephen Crowley

Timpani

Thomas Kelly

Please visit our website, www.cork2020shaydnsymphoniesseries.com, for the dates and programmes for the remainder of the cycle and use the contact form to reserve your seat for the next concert. Whilst we hope dates and programmes will not change, minor revisions might occur if either practicalities or contemporary scholarship dictate.

Orchestra Manager & Social media co-ordinator: Ciara Moloney Programme editor: Niamh Murray
Front-of-house team: Margaret Murphy & Ali O'Mahony



Sincere thanks to the
Cork Academy of Music and the MTU Cork School of Music for making these concerts possible



Should the orchestra include a harpsichord?

In an article published in *The New York Times* on 2 October 1994, Jamie James addressed the contentious issues surrounding the realisation of the "bass line" in Haydn's symphonies. It is widely accepted that reliable evidence exists to prove that a combination of cello, double bass and bassoon was always involved, but whether or not there should also be a harpsichord remains unresolved.

When you contemplate purchasing a recording of, say, Mahler's Symphony No. 2, you expect that whatever the differences in interpretation and sound quality of the available versions, the notes will be the same in all of them. That is not the case with the symphonies of Franz Joseph Haydn, who left behind a confusing tangle of documents relating to his compositions and performances. To arrive at a definitive set of performing parts is a highly contentious matter, and thus grist for the fine-grinding mills of musicologists, who love nothing more than a good scrape.

Although Haydn's 106 symphonies are one of the best-known and most widely performed bodies of work in Western music, they have not always been well served by the record labels. Just four years ago, the CD catalogue lacked a complete set of them. But now three complete Haydn symphony projects are under way, and although the two most interesting ones, led by Christopher Hogwood for L'Oiseau-Lyre and Roy Goodman for Hyperion, both use period instruments, they sound very different. Behind the difference lies a sharp scholarly dispute, as recent conversations with some of the combatants revealed.

Mr Hogwood's complete recording of the Mozart symphonies with his Academy of Ancient Music was widely hailed in the late 1970s as a ground-breaking venture that helped lend respectability to the application of old instruments to classical music. His Haydn series has just approached the midway point with the release of Volume 6, comprising the early "Sturm und Drang" symphonies. Mr. Goodman's set with the Hanover Band is also about half complete. His most recent release, Volume 16, contains Symphonies Nos. 85 through 87.

Mr Hogwood, in preparing his recordings, has been guided by James Webster, a musicologist at Cornell University. In 1988, Professor Webster published a controversial article in the journal *Early Music* [November 1990] questioning the historical justification for the practice, now common in Haydn symphony performances using period instruments, of adding continuo: a doubling of the bass line and harmonies, usually by harpsichord. 'I like hearing the symphonies without the harpsichord continuo, and I would be just the one to hate it,' said Mr. Hogwood, who himself played continuo in the Academy of St Martin in the Fields' recordings of Mozart's symphonies. I haven't come across any places where I thought a harpsichord would help, and there are a great many movements where you're terribly relieved that the harpsichord isn't plinking away.'

Professor Webster marshals strong arguments to support his theory, but concedes that no documentary evidence exists to settle the case conclusively. Mr Hogwood finds a practical argument against the use of continuo. 'When we played at Esterházy, we saw how small the music room there is,' he said. 'A harpsichord would have taken away half the space for the audience. Besides, they didn't have the harpsichord there. It was at the opera house, and they wouldn't have wanted to move it in and out all the time.' Mr Hogwood uses small forces: six or eight violins and one each of viola, cello and bass. The sound is lean, intimate and very different from that of the Haydn symphony recordings most listeners know.

The ambiguity in the historical record has resulted in a good old-fashioned academic brouhaha centering on the Hogwood recordings. 'I am not the only Haydn lover to be dumbfounded by this decision,' wrote Robert Dearling, a pro-continuo scholar. 'It takes away much of the sound-world of early Haydn and, for me at least, severely detracts from Hogwood's otherwise most musicianly and beautifully played series.' H. C. Robbins Landon, who has for decades been considered the last word in Haydn studies, long insisted on keyboard continuo in the Haydn symphonies; he wrote in 1955 that its omission would be a 'grave error.' Yet he recently reversed that position. 'There is no evidence that Haydn played harpsichord in the symphonies,' he said. He suggested that dispensing with continuo in the symphonies might have been 'another of Haydn's innovations, just as he got rid of the harpsichord in the string quartets.'

Yet Mr Goodman remains unimpressed. 'Well, good for Robbins Landon,' he said testily when informed of this reversal, 'but I'm afraid I'm not joining the club.' Mr Goodman stoutly defends his belief that keyboard continuo is necessary in Haydn's symphonies. He regards Professor Webster's evidence as pure hypothesis, some of it flimsy at that. 'For example, Webster says that there are no figures for the keyboard in the music,' he explained, with reference to the numbers traditionally added below the bass line to spell out the continuo harmonies. 'Well, most 18th-century music has no figures. And at the end of his

article, he complains that most modern continuo is badly played, and uses that as an argument against its existence. I never heard such an unintellectual argument in my life.'

Be that as it may, Goodman's belief in the necessity for continuo is shaped mostly by musical conviction. 'There are certain places where I just feel that the music demands it,' he said. While labouring under no illusions that his intuition will persuade many scholars, he maintains that musical instinct should carry more weight than a tissue of unprovable scholarly theorizing.

Both Hogwood and Goodman cite the music itself as the strongest argument to support their irreconcilable points of view. Hogwood has grown enormously as a conductor in recent years, and Haydn's symphonies are the repertory perhaps best suited to his style of music-making, which is robust and plain-spoken yet witty and highly civilized. Goodman's performances are convincing and just as well played as Hogwood's: not surprising, since many of the Hanover Band players are also in the Academy of Ancient Music.

There is no such thing as a "correct" version of the Haydn symphonies. The continuo question will almost certainly never be settled, unless someone turns up a cache of Haydn letters or other documentary evidence that addresses the issue.

One fact is inescapable: documented evidence exists that composers at London concerts c. 1790-1800 directed from the fortepiano, playing from the bass throughout, as Haydn is reported to have done in his "London" symphonies. The Classical approach evolved from the Baroque, so it is the same idea; but by the time of Haydn and Mozart the keyboard used in various orchestras might have been an early fortepiano, cembalo or other type of keyboard; tradition not standing still, likewise some orchestras may have eschewed keyboard support from a comparatively early date. The use of a harpsichord in Haydn symphonies is predicated on that being the instrument he himself used at Eisenstadt and Esterháza; elsewhere e.g. Paris and London on his later concert tours he still conducted from the keyboard though this was becoming the exception rather than the rule.

It can certainly be argued that the keyboard continuo instrument of the Classical period, if one is to be used at all, would be a fortepiano. It is also true that while a keyboard may have been present (to accompany the arias and other concertante works that were usually intermixed with symphonic movements during concerts), it may not have been played during the purely symphonic pieces. It is also posited that once you have an orchestra you don't need a continuo instrument to obtain "complete" harmonies, as you do in say a Baroque trio sonata). It is also suggested that even with a smallish orchestra (21 strings?), any continuo keyboard instrument is difficult to hear if the members of the orchestra play above mezzo-forte. Nevertheless, such an argument also depends on the instrument involved and its position. What is certainly true is some recordings include a harpsichord, but it is "miked" to sound much louder and more prominent in the recording than is ever possible to hear from even a relatively close seat in a concert hall; and if an instrument has to be boosted by the engineers in order to be heard clearly on a recording, perhaps this a sign that in a more sonically faithful reproduction it would be inaudible, and therefore possibly superfluous.

What is certainly true is that the Baroque keep-the-ensemble-together function of the continuo instrument fell, therefore, to a person giving gestural cues. This could be a "conductor" seated at the keyboard, but not playing it or standing apart from it as a modern conductor. Often the "leader" gave cues with glances or gestures, and this can work very effectively for small orchestras with a stable membership that plays together regularly. Musicologists Neal Zaslaw and John Spitzer, writing in *The Birth of the Orchestra*, cite a German composer, writer, music publisher, and critic J. C. F. Rellstab (1759-1813): 'By 1789 many German theatre orchestras had abandoned the harpsichord; some of them had replaced it with the [forte]piano; others used no keyboard instrument at all.'

What is inescapable is that sparsely orchestrated passages in many of Haydn's symphonies can sound bare and incomplete without a harpsichord continuo. Nevertheless, it has to be the "right" sort of harpsichord, played by someone who is as able to contribute meaningfully and appropriately to the textures of a "classical" symphony as they are to realizing the figured bass of music from the Baroque period – two very different sound worlds. Today, James Taylor will realise the continuo part for No. 11 on the harpsichord used since the series commenced in 2020 (a Michael Johnson 1999 reproduction of a Jans Goermans instrument from 1764, enlarged by Pascal Taskin in 1783-84, now in the University of Edinburgh's collection). For No. 98 he will deploy the digital-sampling of a fortepiano from 1790 that is in Peter Karstend's Collection of Historical Keyboards (Braunschweig, Germany); this was sourced for us by Kevin O'Connell, to whom we are indebted.