3 Haydn's aesthetics

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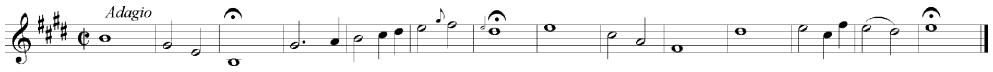
[Haydn's] theoretical *raisonnements* were very simple: A piece of music ought to have a fluent melody; coherent ideas; no superfluous ornaments, nothing overdone, no deafening accompaniments and so forth.[1]

Haydn's personality[2]

Until recently, it might have seemed odd to suggest that Haydn possessed anything resembling a coherent aesthetics. Such a notion is incompatible with the traditional image of "Papa Haydn": pious, good-humored, concerned for the welfare of others, proud of his students, regular in habits, conservative; but also naive and unreflective. However, this image is one-sided; it reflects the elderly and increasingly frail man encountered by his first biographers, Georg August Griesinger and Albert Christoph Dies.[3] For a more accurate sense of Haydn's personality, we must turn to his correspondence and other primary sources, insofar as possible from different periods of his life. These are more revealing than has usually been assumed, and convey a tangible sense of the man Haydn: the vigorous and productive composer, performer, Kapellmeister, impresario, businessman, conqueror of London, friend, husband, and lover. Once he is understood as a real person actively engaged in his world, it may seem plausible to inquire into his aesthetic beliefs.

Even the sobriquet "Papa" can be understood in more appropriate ways: as the "father of the symphony," obviously, but also in the sense of "patriarch," as implied by the resolution making him a life member of the Vienna Tonkünstler-Sozietät in 1797 "by virtue of his extraordinary merit as the father and reformer of the noble art of music."[4] Haydn's public career largely exemplified the Enlightenment ideal of the *honnête homme*:[5] the man whose good character and worldly success enable and justify each other; he has been described as the first artist of any kind to achieve European-wide celebrity in his own lifetime.[6] But in private it was a different matter. His marriage was unhappy; he was often lonely and at times melancholy. His character was not simple, but marked by a fundamental duality between earnestness and humor. Although Haydn's modesty was genuine, this too was part of his public persona; in private it was again a different matter. He took great pride in his works, notably including his vocal music.[7] He prized his status as an "original" and was sensitive to criticism. After Mozart's death he

Example 3.1 Example from Haydn's "London Notebook."



willingly accepted the role of greatest living composer; in London he actively defended his "rank" (as he called it) against his rival Pleyel.[8]

Although in no sense an intellectual or a connoisseur of literature, art, or philosophy, Haydn was interested all these subjects. In the 1780s he greatly valued Vienna's artistic and intellectual openness under Joseph II; he recruited important patrons and made close personal friends. His observations in his so-called "London Notebooks" reveal an active interest in every aspect of social life and culture, "high" and "low" alike.[9] In addition to German, he read and wrote Latin and Italian fluently. His library included not only treatises on music but also the complete works of Shakespeare (in English) and of Metastasio and Goldoni, as well as many works of literature and even philosophy; he also owned many engravings.[10] *This* person, I submit, will have had strong aesthetic beliefs. In what follows I focus on Haydn's own ideas, insofar as possible, as expressed in his own words: again, his letters and the London Notebooks permit us to control and augment the often tendentious reports and anecdotes in secondary sources.

Expression

Haydn's musical aesthetics by and large agreed with those current in the second half of the eighteenth century. The traditional foundations of music were imitation and expression,[11] but the purpose of a composition was to "move" the listener. Dies writes: "Haydn's initial aim (this much emerges from his vocal compositions) was always first of all to engage the senses by means of a rhythmically apt and attractive melody. Thereby in a subliminal manner he leads the listener to the primary goal: to move the heart in a manifold way."[12] This orientation assumed engaged listeners, who to be sure approached a composition with many preconceptions, but were prepared to follow its "argument," in a rhetorical sense.[13]

Regarding the necessity for expression, there was little difference between vocal and instrumental music for Haydn. What needs emphasis, because it conflicts with conventional wisdom, is the primacy of vocal music in his mind both generally and in terms of his own oeuvre. He recorded a touching example of vocal expressiveness in the London Notebooks (see Ex. 3.1): "A week before Pentecost I heard 4,000 children sing this song in St. Paul's

Cathedral. In my entire life no music has moved me as much as this reverent and innocent one."[14] Dies commented:

> He noted that the voices sounded like angels; that the descent to low B in the first three measures created a frightening, heartstopping effect, in that the notes died away in the delicate throats of the children and the B could be heard only as a hovering aura; and that in the continuation of the melody the ascending notes gradually increased in life and force and, in that the melody thereby gained light and shade, powerfully affected the expression.[15]

If Dies can be believed, Haydn here adumbrated an informal theory, no less, of the threefold relation between the construction of a melody (or a work), the manner of its production by particular performers in a particular setting, and the resulting effect. The Swedish diplomat Fredrik Samuel Silverstolpe reports his having invoked a correspondence between musical "actions" and the things represented:

> He showed me the aria . . . from *The Creation* [no. 6, "Rolling in foaming billows"] that is intended to portray the motion of the sea and the rocks rising out of it. "Look," he said in a joking tone, "see how the notes run up and down like waves? See too there the mountains, which rise out of the depths of the sea?"[16]

This sense of word-painting reflects the common eighteenth-century notion of a link between the "motions" (activity) within a composition and the "motions of the soul" it arouses or reflects.[17] But expression remained paramount; regarding the contrasting "Softly purling glides the limpid brook" in the major, Silverstolpe continues, "But as we came to the clear stream, oh! I was entirely carried away . . . [He] sang at the piano with a simplicity that went straight to the heart."

If the *Tonmalerei* in the vocal numbers of Haydn's oratorios often seems straightforward, the "Idea" or "Representation of Chaos" (the German *Vorstellung* implies both senses) is another matter. Swieten, who made many suggestions regarding the musical realization of both oratorios, merely commented in passing that "Chaos" might appropriately be rendered by "picturesque features" (*mahlerische Züge*)![18] At any rate Silverstolpe has Haydn address the issue of creating expressive value by technical means: "Eventually Haydn let me hear . . . the representation of Chaos. 'You have doubtless noticed how I have avoided the resolutions that one most expects. That is because nothing has yet assumed form.'"[19]

But instrumental music also demanded expression. Haydn wrote Mme Genzinger regarding the sonata Hob. XVI: 49: "This sonata . . . is meant forever for your grace alone . . . The Adagio . . . is very full of meaning (*hat sehr vieles zu bedeuten*), which I will analyze (*zergliedern*) for your grace at

[the first] opportunity."[20] A titillating anecdote suggests that he thought of certain instrumental works as programmatic in a larger or more pervasive sense. In Griesinger's version:

> It would be very interesting to know from what motives Haydn created his compositions, as well as the feelings and ideas which he had in mind and which he strove to express in musical language . . . He related . . . that he had occasionally portrayed moral characters [*moralische Charaktere*] in his symphonies. In one of his oldest, which he however was no longer able to identify precisely, "the dominant idea [is] how God speaks to an unrepentant sinner, and pleads with him to reform; but the sinner in his foolishness pays no heed to the exhortations."[21]

Dies tells a similar story, according to which Haydn specified that the movement was an Adagio.[22] Its identity has been much speculated upon (Symphonies nos. 7, 22, 26 and 28 and the overture to *Der Götterrath* have been suggested), but no consensus has emerged.[23]

The topics of Haydn's "characteristic" symphonies, as they are most appropriately termed, are serious: time and the seasons, religious observance, "ethnically" significant melodic materials, the hunt, and associations with the theater or literary sayings.[24] Regarding ethnic material, Prince Nicolaus Esterházy fostered Hungarian cultural activity; he must have tolerated, and might have stimulated, Haydn's use of such materials in his art music, including several baryton works composed expressly for him.[25] It seems likely that such quotations and thematic references were a central part of eighteenth-century listeners' understanding,[26] possibly even comprising part of the "psychological material" of a given work, to be developed in conjunction with the development of the musical material in the conventional sense.[27] A different aspect of such material was what we would today call its "orientalism," for example the "Turkish" atmosphere frequently invoked in *L'incontro improvviso* of 1775 (similar to Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* of 1782).[28]

Finally, Haydn's extramusical associations are linked to musical rhetoric generally. Again, this is most obvious in his vocal music, in which (like Handel) he was a brilliant and enthusiastic word-painter. No more than his "tailoring" his music for his audiences (see below) should this trait be taken as a fault or a "problem" (as was done in the age of "absolute music"). On the contrary, it is but one aspect of what has been called his "musical imagery,"[29] which comprises key associations (e.g., E♭ with the hereafter, as in "Behold, O weak and foolish man" in *The Seasons*), semantic associations (e.g., the flute with the pastoral, as in Symphony no. 6 and elsewhere in the 1761 "times of day" trilogy) and musical "conceptualizations" (e.g., long notes on "*E*-wigkeit" in *The Creation* or "ae-*ter*-num" in the late *Te Deum*).

But rhetoric is a matter not only of "figures" and topics, but also of contrasts in register, gestures, implications of genre, the rhythms of destabilization and recovery, and so on, especially as these play out over the course of an entire movement – all in order to "move the heart."

Melody

The importance of "fluent melody" (*fliessender Gesang*) emerges directly from Griesinger's familiar report (see the epigraph); similarly, Dies mentions melody alone as Haydn's means of "engaging" the listener (beginning of the section "Expression"). Many other sources testify to the importance of melody for Haydn. Robert Kimmerling, who studied with him around 1760 and later became director of music at the Benedictine monastery at Melk, wrote on an edition of Baldassare Galuppi's opera *Il mondo alla roversa, ossia le donne che comandano* (The world upside-down; or, the women who command): "NB: This excellent opera pleased my teacher Joseph Haydn. He recommended it to me . . . for continued study on account of its *good melody*."[30]

According to Griesinger, late in life Haydn "criticized the fact that now so many musicians compose who have never learned how to sing. 'Singing must almost be reckoned one of the lost arts; instead of song, people allow the instruments to dominate.'"[31] In 1804 he wrote in a similar vein to Karl Friedrich Zelter, the director of the Singakademie in Berlin, praising his efforts to restore "the already half-forgotten art of singing."[32] In such utterances Haydn complains about what we might broadly refer to as the decline of "vocal culture" at the turn of the nineteenth century, both compositionally and in terms of performance.[33] Of particular interest is a much earlier letter praising his own Lieder (while disparaging Leopold Hofmann's "Gassenlieder"), in which he refers to himself as a performer: "I will sing [my songs] myself, in the best houses: a master must see to his rights by his presence and by correct performance (*wahrer Vortrag*)."[34]

Haydn insisted that the accompanying instruments not dominate the melody, especially when the latter is a singer. In 1795 he commented on a performance of Francesco Bianchi's *Acis and Galatea* in London: "The winds are very rich, and it seems to me that if they were reduced one would follow the melody more easily. The orchestra is larger this year, but as mechanical as ever: indiscreet in accompaniment."[35] The phrase "indiscreet in accompaniment" is almost a leitmotif of his attitude on these matters. A tangible manifestation of this principle is seen in Haydn's corrections to August Eberhard Müller's piano-vocal arrangement of *The Seasons*, many of which lighten Müller's over-heavy piano accompaniment[36] – including Swieten's

notorious croaking frogs: "in the full orchestra this vulgar passage soon disappears, but it cannot remain in the piano score."[37] It is worth noting that Haydn's attitude on elaborate accompaniments was different from Mozart's, as his music altogether is leaner in texture, indeed often based on only three, or even two, real parts.

Ideas: originality

A central component of Haydn's self-image (as well as his reception) was originality.[38] The concept has several aspects: inspiration, particularly the faculty of inventing novel musical ideas; independence from influences; the concept of genius. Regarding inspiration, Haydn strikingly asserted that its source was improvisation. More precisely, he discovered or invented his musical "ideas" – a more varied and protean concept than mere "themes" – by "fantasizing" (*phantasieren*) at the keyboard, as Griesinger reports: "Haydn always composed his works at the keyboard. 'I sat down, began to fantasize, according to whether my mood was sad or happy, serious or playful, [until] I had seized upon an idea.'"[39] This was not (or was not restricted to) mere "noodling," or the making of cadenzas, but entailed purposeful, compositionally oriented activity. Despite Haydn's current reputation as an exponent of musical "logic," this emphasis on fantasy as a basis for composition is no different in principle from that described by C. P. E. Bach in the middle of the eighteenth century,[40] and insisted on by Heinrich Schenker.[41]

Silverstolpe reported: "I remember that one day he had just rejected and crossed out the finale of a string quartet, in order to write a different finale: 'The previous one,' he said, 'is only an *exercise*; it does not flow freely from the source.'"[42] Here Haydn contrasts merely correct composition with that based on inspiration, which "flows freely"; the implication is that its "source" lies before, or beyond, rational thought. The distinction between artistic creation and mere craftsmanship also informs Griesinger's more familiar anecdote:

> Haydn was informed of Albrechtsberger's opinion that all fourths should be banished from strict composition. "What good is that?" replied Haydn. "Art is free, and should not be inhibited by artisans' fetters (*Handwerksfesseln*). The ear must decide – a trained ear, of course – and I am as competent to make laws in this respect as anyone else. Such affectations are useless; I would rather that somebody tried to compose a really *new* kind of minuet."[43]

These words were not merely laid in Haydn's mouth; in 1779 he wrote to the Tonkünstler-Sozietät in almost identical terms: "The fine arts (*freye Künste*)

and the so beautiful science of composition tolerate no *Handwerksfesseln*: the spirit and the soul must be free, if one wishes to be of service to the widows and to attain one's just deserts."[44] Access to artistic "laws" is open to persons who have both training and experience, and taste; their judgments are at once individual and definitive. (The latter point resonates with Kant's theory of aesthetic judgments; see below.) At the same time, the demand for "freedom" testifies to artists' rapidly growing bourgeois aspirations towards the close of the eighteenth century.[45]

Originality on the largest scale is addressed in Griesinger's famous account of Haydn's conditions at the Esterházy court:

> Although Haydn's outward situation was anything but brilliant, it provided him the ideal opportunity for the development of his many-sided talent. "My prince was satisfied with all my works, I received praise; as head of an orchestra I was able to make experiments, observe what makes a [good] effect and what weakens it, and thus revise, expand, cut, take chances; I was cut off from the world, nobody around me could upset my self-confidence, and so I had to become original (*mußte ich original werden*)."[46]

Griesinger sets the stage for his quotation by invoking (falsely) a common trope in discourses about artists: the contrast between their modest outward circumstances and the excellence of their works. (Haydn's situation was scarcely modest; the Esterházy court was one of the richest in Europe, and Nicolaus lavished his full resources and attention on his musical establishment.) Haydn's continuation (as transmitted) is a remarkable rhetorical construction: an elaborate periodic sentence, which postpones the main point until the end.[47] He addresses three aspects of his music-making in turn – social, technical, psychological/aesthetic – and thus implies an essential connectedness among these domains (compare his complex account of the children's melody). He begins modestly, in conformity to his position at court, by placing Esterházy in the subject position ("my prince was satisfied"); even when Haydn names himself, he employs an implicitly passive construction ("I received approval"). Only when he turns to the technical domain does he become the subject: "I could experiment" regarding instrumental balance, effectiveness, large-scale proportions and so forth. None of these points yet pertains to originality as such, except perhaps the final verb: "take chances" (*wagen*). But Haydn still approaches his goal indirectly, via a detour into psychology: it was because he was isolated in the Hungarian "wasteland" (*Einöde*), as he called it elsewhere,[48] that he had no choice but "to become original." Even at this climax he again uses an implied passive, attributing his success in effect to the force of circumstance – but also implying that it was in some sense inevitable, the result of a force

of nature. As we shall see, this claim links up to central aesthetic notions of his time.

What Haydn meant by "original" in this context was presumably that he belonged to no "school" and acknowledged few if any models. When Griesinger inquired about a report that Sammartini had been the inspiration for his early string quartets, he brusquely rejected it: "He had heard Sammartini's music, but had never valued it, 'because Sammartini was a dauber (*Schmierer*)' . . . and said that he recognized only Emanuel Bach as his model." On the other hand, Haydn's utterances reveal his awareness that the traditional aesthetics of mimesis (imitation) was gradually being supplanted by the aesthetics of expression, with its demands for "inspiration" and "originality" in a proto-Romantic sense.

Ideas: coherence

Griesinger's account (epigraph) moves directly from melody to "coherent ideas" (*zusammenhängende Ideen*). Haydn returned to this point soon thereafter, immediately after emphasizing his improvisatory methods:

> Once I had seized upon an idea, my whole endeavor was to develop and sustain it in keeping with the rules of the art . . . This is what so many younger composers lack: they string one little idea after another; they break off when they have scarcely begun. Hence nothing remains in the heart after one has heard it.[49]

Here Haydn states that violation of the principle of coherence – whereby the "rules of the art" are principles, not prescriptions or proscriptions – runs the risk of aesthetic failure: if the development is not logical and consistent, "nothing remains in the heart." Silverstolpe's account of Haydn's teaching has the same burden:

> Once, when I visited Haydn, he was looking through a work of a student . . . The longer he read, the darker became his expression. "I have nothing to criticize about the part-writing," he said, "it is correct. However, the proportions are not as I would wish. Look here: this idea is only half complete; it shouldn't be abandoned so quickly. And this phrase is poorly related to the others. Try to give a proper balance to the whole; that can't be too difficult, because the main idea is good."[50]

An important aspect of Haydn's demand for coherence was his self-criticism (see Silverstolpe on the rejected quartet-finale). In March 1792 he wrote Mme Genzinger from London regarding Symphony no. 93, which he had just premiered:

> I cannot send Your Grace the symphony, which is dedicated to you . . . because I intend to alter the finale, and to improve it, since it is too weak compared with the preceding movements. I was persuaded of this myself, and by the public as well, when I produced it the first time . . . notwithstanding, which the symphony made the most profound impression on the audience.[51]

(Note again the lack of modesty.) Griesinger quotes the composer: "From the mass of his compositions one might infer that Haydn must have worked very easily. That was not the case. 'I was never a hasty writer [*Geschwindschreiber*], and always composed with reflection (*Bedächtlichkeit*) and diligence. Such productions are also meant to last.'"[52] Haydn's *Bedächtigkeit* (the modern form) resonates with E. T. A. Hoffmann's famous attribution of *Besonnenheit* (self-possession) to Beethoven. The final sentence is typical of the composer's conviction late in life that his works would outlive him – that he would become a classic. Griesinger quotes him elsewhere: "When a master has produced one or two outstanding works, his fame is assured; my *Creation* will survive, and probably *The Seasons* as well."[53]

Other aesthetic principles

Correctness. We have already noted Haydn's denigration of "artisans' fetters" in comparison to the "rules of the art." In fact, although he naturally set considerable store by correctness in technical matters (compare his initial comment to the student), he was both willing to take liberties and sensitive to criticism of his part-writing. This emerges from numerous comments in both Griesinger and Dies, as well as his own occasional notations of "con licenza" and the like in his autographs.[54] A letter to Härtel regarding the publication of *The Creation* betrays his sensitivity (he underlined the entire quoted passage):

> I only wish and hope that the worthy reviewers won't pull the hair of my *Creation* too strongly. Of course a few passages, or perhaps other little things, may offend somewhat with respect to musical grammar; but every true connoisseur will grasp their motivation – just as I do – and will rise above this bone of contention: "no rule without its exception."[55]

Variety; wit; stylistic mixture. Like all eighteenth-century musicians, Haydn subscribed to the principle of variety within unity. Occasionally he was concerned with variety for its own sake. When composing his second set of lieder in the early 1780s, he wrote his publisher Artaria: "I would very much like to have three new, tender Lied-texts . . . because almost all the others are cheerful in expression – the content could also be sad – so that

I have light and shade, as in the first twelve."[56] The concept of "light and shade," also found in his description of the children singing at St. Paul's, was likewise common in eighteenth-century writings; it can be glossed as the art-historical concept *chiaroscuro*. Insofar as it was positive, the initial reception of *The Seasons* emphasized its variety, in comparison to *The Creation*.[57]

The topic of Haydn's humor is so familiar that I need not dwell on it here, except to emphasize that the governing concept is "wit," with its connotations of intelligence and originality in addition to mere joking and high spirits.[58] One aspect of Haydn's wit relates to variety: his tendency to juxtapose contrasting stylistic levels, something he did all his life. He did this even in church music, as Griesinger reports:

> In the "Creation Mass" it occurred to him, as he was composing "Qui tollis peccata mundi" in the Gloria, that we poor mortals after all chiefly sin only against moderation and chastity. Hence he set the words "qui tollis peccata, peccata mundi" to the playful melody from the passage in *The Creation* [No. 32], "The dew-dropping morn, O how she quickens all!" However, so that this worldly notion would not be too prominent, he had the full chorus burst in with "Miserere" immediately thereafter.[59]

This intrusion of "profane" music into this mass (1801) so offended the Empress Marie Therese (who in general adored Haydn and his music)[60] that she ordered that the passage be changed in the materials used at the *Hofkapelle*. In fact, however, such stylistic mixtures were fundamental to Haydn's music, notwithstanding that they offended critics from the 1760s in Berlin[61] until at least the 1970s,[62] many of whom manifested a deep ambivalence towards Haydn's (and Mozart's) sacred vocal music altogether.

Correct performance; "Delikatesse." Haydn believed that his own participation was necessary for good performances of his music, in part because of what he called its *Delikatesse* (refinement or subtlety). In June 1802 he wrote Prince Nicolaus Esterházy II, asking permission to decline the Grand Duke of Tuscany's request to be supplied with two masses; one reason was that "without my direction they will inevitably lose the greatest part of their value, on account of their subtlety, which would greatly compromise my efforts [on your behalf], and be highly unpleasant to me personally."[63] (The Prince "suggested" that he comply nonetheless.) On another occasion he wrote Mme Genzinger regarding Symphonies nos. 95 and 96: "Please ask Herr Kees on my behalf to have a rehearsal of each symphony, because they are very subtle (*delicat*), especially the finale of [no. 96], in which I recommend the softest *piano* possible and a very fast tempo."[64]

The issue of rehearsals came up often during Haydn's later years; the implication is that many performances were still carried out more or less at sight. This seems remarkable for works as "subtle" as the "London"

Symphonies, although one presumes that in London, under Haydn's direction, these works must have been adequately rehearsed. An indirect confirmation emerges from his notebooks: "On 30 March 1795 I was invited to a big concert in Freemasons Hall by Dr. [Samuel] Arnold and his associates; a grand symphony was to have been performed under my direction. But since they didn't want to offer me a rehearsal, I refused and did not appear."[65] Later he felt it necessary to give instruction to a canon regarding a performance of the *Mass in Time of War* (1796) planned for Ljubljana (in present-day Slovenia):

> [Haydn] sang the beginnings of most of the movements, so that the canon could hear both the various tempos and, here and there, the correct expression. [The canon] should instruct the performers, both individually and as a group; in particular, they should refrain from any sort of ornamentation, which could have no effect other than to disfigure such a subtle [*delikat*] composition: for it already includes all possible expression in itself anyway, just as it is; and the greatest beauty is dependent solely on the correct tempo, [bringing out] the proper light and shade, and precise execution.[66]

The topics covered included tempo, expression, precision, and (again) "light and shade," as well as Haydn's insistence that there be no additional ornamentation. The latter attitude, which admittedly comes from the end of his long career, seems almost Beethovenish.

"*Tailoring.*" Like any eighteenth-century composer, Haydn routinely accommodated, or "tailored" as Mozart would have said,[67] his music to the performers and circumstances for which they were destined. His letter regarding the cantata *Applausus* (1768; Haydn received the commission via a middleman) is often quoted for its detailed instructions on performing practice, but concludes with a less familiar comment: "If with this work I have perhaps failed to divine the taste of the musicians, I am not to be blamed for this, because neither the persons nor the place are known to me; the fact that they were concealed from me truly made my work distasteful."[68] (Less distasteful, we may presume, was the fee of a hundred gulden, equivalent to about a quarter of his annual salary at the Esterházy court.) What is significant here is not Haydn's ill-temper, but his assumption that ordinarily he would compose "for" the performers and the occasion as a matter of course. In 1789 he willingly revised the piano trio Hob. XV: 13 at Artaria's request: "I enclose herewith the third piano trio, which I have composed entirely anew, with variations, according to your taste."[69] The point was not Artaria's taste, of course, but that of the potential market for Haydn's music. Another example of "tailoring" is his systematic differentiation in his London piano works of 1794–95 between a difficult, extroverted style for

Therese Jansen, a noted virtuoso, and a less demanding one for his lover Rebecca Schroeter and other female amateurs.[70] Of course, composing "for" his audiences in this way, whether Prince Esterházy or the anonymous publics who purchased his 1780s instrumental music, entailed no compromise of his artistic integrity or level of achievement.

Haydn's aesthetics; Haydn's style

A word is necessary regarding the relation between these aesthetic principles and Haydn's style as we understand it today. In many ways it can be interpreted as analogous to the duality in his personality between earnestness and humor. He implied as much when saying that he fantasized "according to whether my mood was sad *or* happy, serious *or* trifling" (emphasis added). Of course, in his music these qualities are not unmediated binary opposites but poles of a continuum. Admittedly, since about 1800 Haydn's wit has been the better understood pole. But "wit" signifies intelligence as well as humor, and Haydn's often shades into irony, as was recognized by his contemporaries. Johann Karl Friedrich Triest wrote in 1801: "Haydn might perhaps be compared, in respect to the fruitfulness of his imagination, with our Jean Paul [Richter] (omitting, obviously, the latter's chaotic design; transparent representation is not the least of Haydn's virtues); or, in respect to his humor and original wit (*Laune*), with Lor. Sterne";[71] Jean Paul and especially Sterne are touchstones of irony in fiction.[72] In fact, however, Haydn's irony goes beyond humor: a passage may be deceptive in character or function (the D major interlude in the first movement of the "Farewell" Symphony sounds like a minuet out of context, but it is not a minuet and plays a crucial tonal and psychological role; more generally, both this symphony and no. 46 systematically subvert generic norms); a movement may systematically subvert listeners' expectations until (or even past) the end (the finales of the quartets Op. 33 no. 2 and Op. 54 no. 2); or he may "problematize" music rather than merely compose it (the tonal ambiguity in Op. 33 no. 1).[73]

In any case, earnestness and depth of feeling are equally important in Haydn's art. The slow introductions to the "London" Symphonies are implicit invocations of the sublime (especially clear in no. 103, with its resemblance to the "Dies irae," a passage that may have influenced Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*). The sublime then became overt in the Chaos–Light sequence in *The Creation* and elsewhere in the late sacred vocal music.[74] Many works that were later taken as humorous Haydn did not intend as such, including the "Farewell" and "Surprise" symphonies (the drum-stroke in the latter was his "brilliant début" in the 1792 London season, in the

context of his rivalry with Pleyel).[75] Similarly, even at his wittiest or most eccentric he never abandons tonal and formal coherence. One should be skeptical of any simplistic correlation between this opposition – earnestness vs. wit – and other common oppositions of Haydn's time; for example, traditional or learned vs. modern or galant style. Still less may we equate it with the distinction "art" vs. "entertainment," and least of all with any supposed differences in artistic quality. Haydn's early string quartets, which are on the "light" side stylistically, are arguably his most polished works of the 1750s; the baryton trios and lyre notturni are finely wrought compositions, as rewarding in their way as the raw expressionism of the "Sturm und Drang."[76]

The principle of variety within unity led Haydn, again in distinction to Mozart, to base a given movement on a single main idea, which his "whole endeavor was to develop and sustain" in manifold, ever-new ways. Thus the so-called "second theme" of his sonata forms is often a variant of the opening theme. To be sure, the working-out usually entails contrasting effects ("light and shade"): the second theme usually differs in treatment, and the recapitulation brings new developments. In his double-variation slow movements the alternating major and minor themes are usually variants of each other; the stylistic dualities in his late sacred vocal music now seem as exhilarating as the similar mixtures in *Die Zauberflöte*. Both novelty and continuity are maintained from beginning to end.

In one respect, however, Haydn did court a union (not merely a juxtaposition) of opposites: his "popular" style that simultaneously addressed the connoisseur. Triest wrote: "If one wanted to describe the character of Haydn's compositions in just two words, they would be . . . artful popularity or popular (easily comprehensible, effective) artfulness."[77] No other composer – certainly not C. P. E. Bach or Mozart, notwithstanding their hopeful appeals to both "Kenner" and "Liebhaber" – could match Haydn's ostensibly simple or folklike tunes, or broadly humorous sallies, that conceal (or develop into) the highest art. One of the best early comments on Haydn's music was Ernst Ludwig Gerber's, that he "possessed the great art of appearing familiar in his themes."[78] That is, their "popular" character is neither merely given, nor an unmediated utterance of "Papa Haydn," but the calculated result (*appearing* familiar) of sophisticated artistic shaping ("great art"). This becomes obvious when Haydn employs tunes from cultures other than his own, as in the "Croatian" theme in the Andante of Symphony no. 103 and the bordun-like theme of the finale of no. 104. In the former, the piquant raised fourth degree is not part of a quotation, but is assimilated into a theme appropriate to a grand symphony. This becomes clear no later than the mini-reprise towards the end of the second strain of the theme, when the melody suddenly turns up in the bass.[79]

Haydn, Kant, and genius

Haydn's aesthetic principles were coherent, consciously held, an active part of his artistic personality. But, when all is said and done, they were conventional: to move the listener by means of melody, original ideas animated by "fantasy," and coherent development. And yet Haydn's art is everything but ordinary. How to reconcile these two aspects? Clearly, although we might be able to infer from his principles what kind of artist he was, it would be a hopeless task to infer what his music sounds like, still less how great it is.

This inability to "predict" Haydn's art from his aesthetic notions of those of his time has an uncanny resonance with his and his contemporaries' beliefs about originality and genius. After summarizing Haydn's *raisonnements* (epigraph), Griesinger continues: "But how to satisfy these requirements? That, [Haydn] admitted, cannot be learnt by any rules; it depends entirely on natural talent and the inspiration of inward genius."[80] This statement amounts to a précis of Kant's often quoted account of genius in the *Critique of Judgment*:

> . . . genius is a *talent* for producing something for which no determinate rule can be given: not a disposition towards a skill at something that can be learned by following some rule or other; hence its foremost property must be *originality* . . .
>
> Genius cannot itself describe or indicate theoretically how it brings about its productions . . . and therefore the author of a production that he owes to his genius does not himself know how the ideas for it come to him, nor has it in his power to think them out at will or according to plan, or to communicate them to others by means of instructions that [would] enable them to generate comparable productions.[81]

Indeed Griesinger himself quotes from this passage in the paragraph devoted to Haydn's *raisonnements*. And Haydn's contemporaries had been referring to him as a "genius" since the 1780s.[82]

Kant's insistence that the chief distinguishing characteristic of genius is originality suggests that we revisit Haydn's "and so I had to become original." This utterance is weary from unreflective hagiographical citation; especially regrettable is its (often unconscious) function in crudely evolutionist interpretations of his career: if he had to "become" original, there must have been an earlier phase in which he was not yet so. My attempt at a less simplistic interpretation (above) is not the only recent one.[83] But I would suggest that Haydn actually got it wrong. Once again he was too modest: his formulation implies that any talented and hard-working composer in the same circumstances might have "had" to become original. But by Kant's precepts, and our sense of things, that is false; nobody else in the history of music could

have done what he did. Indeed, if one takes Kant seriously, one must conclude that he did not become original at all! For if he was truly "an original" – a genius, a force of nature – he must have been so from the beginning. And so he was, as connoisseurs of his early music have long argued.

From this point of view, the primary significance of Haydn's aesthetics is what it may say to us. A more accurate and nuanced sense of his artistic beliefs should become part and parcel of an increasingly realistic image of his personality altogether, as it has developed during the last quarter-century. And that image – notwithstanding "persona theory" and postmodern speculations about the "death of the artist" – *is* related to our understanding of his art. It isn't possible to believe in "Papa Haydn" and simultaneously to appreciate the violent expressionism of the "Sturm und Drang," the tonal and gestural subtleties of the string quartets of the 1780s, the boldness and originality of the "London" Symphonies, the sublimity of his sacred vocal music, or the sentiment of his piano music, Lieder, and part-songs. The reverse is also true: the man who composed such music must have reflected on it and on what he was doing, must have had "larger" intentions in mind – as his notions about his own music indicate. Haydn wanted to "move the heart" not only in his own day, but more than two hundred years later, and beyond.