

PART III

Genres

7 Orchestral music: symphonies and concertos

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During the span of almost forty years that Haydn wrote symphonies, the nature of the genre changed dramatically, from a type of composition that served various musical and social functions of the *ancien régime* to a highly defined genre that would stand at the center of musical life for the next two centuries. New concert societies late in the eighteenth century broadened the class-base of the symphonic audience, and Haydn proved extraordinarily adept at making the transition. Throughout his career he gradually reshaped the nature of the symphony, and in the end provided an enduring model for future practitioners of the genre. Symphonies teemed in Vienna during the mid-eighteenth century, and composers such as Matthias Monn, Wagenseil, Dittersdorf, and Hofmann provided much originality. Nevertheless, we owe the emergence of the symphonic tradition primarily to Haydn, and even major composers of the twentieth century, Prokofiev among them, have acknowledged that debt. As a composer of concertos Haydn's achievements are less striking, although because of the prominence of the symphonies we tend to underestimate the concertos.

Because Haydn's symphonies still speak to us with a relevance that has traversed two centuries, we sometimes forget that in the eighteenth century vocal music was considered pre-eminent.¹ With opinion such as this as the common currency, it should not surprise us that Haydn, in his autobiographical sketch from 1776, listed only vocal works among those he considered his finest.² Late nineteenth-century writers such as Eduard Hanslick contributed to another misconception about eighteenth-century symphonic works, in their insistence on these as absolute or pure music. Unlike Hanslick, eighteenth-century commentators, including Haydn's biographers Georg August Griesinger and Albert Christoph Dies, were deeply concerned about the social or spiritual functions of symphonies.³ Griesinger wished to know "from what motives Haydn wrote his compositions, as well as the feelings and ideas that he had in mind and that he strove to express through musical language." Haydn replied that "he oftentimes had portrayed moral characters in his symphonies. In one of the oldest, that he could not accurately identify, 'the dominant idea is of God speaking with an abandoned sinner, pleading with him to reform. But, the sinner in his thoughtlessness pays no heed to the admonition.'"⁴ Studies in moral

characters proliferated during the eighteenth century, best known from *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* of Addison and Steele, introduced in Germany by Mattheson in *Der Vernünfftler*, and later popularized by Haydn's professed hero, Christian Fürchegott Gellert. Haydn had presumably read enough of Gellert's writing to be aware that his description of God and the sinner, with its religious orientation, deviated from the standard descriptions of moral characters.⁵

Dies also raised the issue, having heard several times about the possibility that Haydn "sought in instrumental pieces to work out some verbal problem or other selected at will," including character representation. Haydn's answer of "seldom" has provided fodder for the absolutists: "In instrumental music, I generally allowed my purely musical fantasy free play." The one exception to this occurred in the Adagio of a symphony, in which "I chose as a theme a conversation between God and a heedless sinner."⁶ If Haydn could no longer identify the symphony, recent commentators have been more than prepared to try.⁷ Of even greater interest is his response that he seldom attempted character representation, and that he usually indulged in "purely musical fantasy." That reply does not square with the facts, and it may have been a ploy to avoid the story of the sinner, preferring in 1806 that readers of Griesinger and Dies should regard his symphonies in the light of the most current thinking on the subject.

The symphonies themselves reveal a composer deeply concerned about expression and wishing to engage his audience, whether in the court of his patron or in a more public forum, in a provocative manner on issues both sacred and secular. To achieve this, Haydn occasionally quoted vocal music in his symphonies, including arias, street songs, and folk tunes; he used opera or liturgical music as models for symphonies; and, he had aspired to emulate certain types of literature, especially dramatic works, but also novels, other types of prose, poetry, or more generally the principles of rhetoric.⁸ The answer to Griesinger about portraying moral characters likely was accurate, although he probably did not intend this in an overtly programmatic manner. The moral essence of a symphony for Haydn meant something different, with earlier works assuming sacred characteristics or positions similar to those emerging from opera, and later works closer to the enlightened views of his friends and associates such as Metastasio, Greiner, Born, Sonnenfels, and no doubt even Nicolaus Esterházy. From these he gained a sense of the secular enlightened notions of morality, involving not only tolerance or principles of altruism, but also the more subtle sense of furthering moral goals through achieving higher levels of refinement. Near the end of his life he could say with confidence from an enlightened moral perspective, "I also believe I have done my duty and have been of use to the world through my works."⁹

Central to Haydn's view of the symphony stood the effect it should have on his audience, a view that changed over time. Because of the nature of his employment and the contractual agreement he had with the Esterházy family at the early stages of that employment, his audience initially differed from that of his symphonist colleagues. While the works of Hofmann, Dittersdorf, and others would have been performed at the Burgtheater and elsewhere in the early 1760s, Haydn's contract limited the performance of his symphonies to his patron, initially at Eisenstadt and later at the new palace in Eszterháza, although that did not necessarily deter performances at other venues (primarily through circulating orchestral parts). Haydn may have been expected to fulfill certain types of social functions with his early symphonies, such as celebrating his prince's birthday, as Giuseppe Carpani in *Le Haydine* claims of no. 25, but that did not prevent him from putting his mark of higher purpose on these works. In sorting out the differences among various types of composition – and Haydn's own definition of what constituted a symphony was surely broader than ours, including overtures if not other types as well¹⁰ – the most fundamental distinction would have been between public works designed for a listening audience and more private types intended primarily for the enjoyment of players.

Belonging to the public category, the symphony and concerto had an affinity to opera and oratorio. Like opera, the symphony necessarily had to arouse the audience's interest. That could be done by focusing on individual players in a concertante style, or through the appeal of orchestration. Haydn's Eisenstadt orchestra of the early 1760s lacked the richer resources of the larger public orchestras, but that did not prevent him from becoming a superb orchestrator. In his early symphonies, Haydn's style of orchestration may have seemed like making a virtue of necessity, but he soon moved away from the standard sounds of strings, horns, and oboes, where winds merely doubled strings or provided static harmonizations. He exploited the distinctive sounds of the winds alone or in combination, and of course used instruments to define topics as well, such as trumpets and drums for military purposes, and horns for the hunt.

Increasingly he saw the engagement of his audience in dramatic terms, building procedures into his symphonies that in some respects allowed these works to parallel drama for the stage. Frequently that drama resists abstraction, becoming definable by quoting well-known pieces of music, or by quoting styles that all would recognize. In his progression towards greater sophistication he moved further away from actual quotation, but at the same time discovered musical principles that heightened drama even more intensely. With his new audiences in Paris and England, he prepared listeners for more complex works by first giving them pieces easier to digest, as happened during his second London season (1792), with no. 98 easing

listeners into the more complexly dramatic no. 94. In no. 98 the minor thematic material of the slow introduction becomes the major theme of the Allegro of this monothematic movement. In no. 94 complexity already permeates the introduction and the effect of this on the rest of the first movement goes far beyond thematic material, to levels of counterpoint, chromatic passages, and other destabilizing factors.

It has been difficult for some, including writers during his time, to accept that Haydn would often write symphonies intended to appeal to popular taste. Griesinger observed that “strict theoreticians found much to take exception to in Haydn’s compositions, and they cried out especially over the debasement of music to comic fooling.” Haydn explained that this did not trouble him, since “a narrow adherence to the rules oftentimes yields works devoid of taste and feeling.”¹¹ For the best minds of the eighteenth century, taste and feeling always trumped the rules, and here Haydn had over half a century of literary tradition to support him. That tradition went back at least as far as the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, whose *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* Haydn had in his personal library.¹² Shaftesbury, perhaps even more influential in Germany than England (certainly swaying Gellert and Haydn’s friend Ignaz von Born), had laid the groundwork for the enlightened conception of the fusion of aesthetics and morality, and in his scheme of things nothing superseded the relationship of author and audience. Writers needed to appeal to their public, but that did not mean pandering to it in their efforts to persuade. Humor played a central role in any strategy to persuade, and Shaftesbury advised writers to “recommend wisdom and virtue in a way of pleasantry and mirth.”¹³

Drama in a symphony must necessarily unfold in the context of musical forms or procedures. In part this concerns the format of a symphony, notably the number of movements and their arrangement. When he started writing symphonies in the late 1750s, the idea of a musical/dramatic thread running through the movements was simply not part of the aesthetic. We associate this primarily with Beethoven, but credit for initiating this type of integration of a work goes to Haydn, not only in late symphonies, such as nos. 101 or 104, but much earlier, certainly by 1772 with Symphony no. 45 in *f* minor, the “Farewell.”¹⁴ Concerning the number and order of movements, Haydn appears not to have done anything revolutionary, as he alternated between three and four movements in his early symphonies, using the so-called *da chiesa* format in some, starting with a slow movement; eventually he settled on a four-movement format, and in late symphonies preferred to start with a slow introduction.

The four-movement format has remained the norm, whether movements interconnect or not. Each movement, in most cases with exclusively distinctive characteristics, sets its own tone, means of evocation, and

dramatic appeal, and overall this resulted in something highly satisfying and engaging. Boundless possibilities existed for originality within individual movements, and over time the possibilities for changing approaches to the movements themselves could be striking. Slow movements use melodies of a vocal nature, revealing great beauty, but could just as easily upset that with comic twists, as in no. 93. Third movements, minuets and trios, were under no obligation to behave as minuets, often gravitating more to the character of rustic dances, and equally having the potential to disrupt the triple time with metric ambiguity or other types of distortion,¹⁵ as in no. 94 where figuration periodically shifts the bar line or sets up duple patterns. Finales could range broadly from rondos to sonata form, or find a hybrid approach combining elements of both. We generally recognize Beethoven as the one to shift the weight of works from the first movement to the finale, but Beethoven could take a number of Haydn's late symphonies as his model for this new aesthetic, especially no. 101. Haydn recognized in his own approach that as the drama of all movements became more intense, the finale often required greater substance to bring the work to a fitting close.

Just as Haydn cannot be called the father of the symphony since he did not invent the genre, he similarly did not originate the idea of sonata form, but what he did with it, compared with any of his contemporaries, can only be described as breathtaking. No one understood better than Haydn the dramatic capacity of sonata form, and this took on new and striking features in the late symphonies written for Paris and England. Here slow introductions may be highly integrated with what follows, not only in first movements, but also beyond. Expositions often define polar opposition, not necessarily between first and second themes (many symphonies are monothematic), but possibly between stable thematic material and unstable transitions. Developments take the principles of thematic working and modulatory exploration to new heights. They may also obscure the arrival of the recapitulation with a *fausse reprise*, as happens with the unprepared tonic return of the opening theme in the first movement of no. 91, or the return in the wrong key in the first movement of no. 102. Recapitulations generally do not simply play a role of settling the material of the exposition down in the tonic key; Haydn treats recapitulations as places for dramatic issues to be resolved through an intelligible process. That solution, often revealing parallels to the procedures of drama for the stage, should not go unnoticed by the listener, since it may very well adumbrate through purely musical means a principle central to the Enlightenment.

Pinning down the exact number and chronology of symphonies by Haydn has proved difficult. The most persistent problems arose from Haydn's great popularity and, in the absence of firm copyright laws, the inclination of unscrupulous publishers to issue symphonies written by

others in his name. Currently the number stands at 106, two more than Eusebius Mandyczewski identified for his 1907 catalogue to accompany the complete edition proposed by the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel. The original list of 104 is still in use, although one or two remain suspect and in some cases the proposed order of composition badly misses the mark.¹⁶ All of this has hampered the preparation of a collected edition of the symphonies; the Breitkopf project faltered after forty-nine symphonies. Although the Haydn Society of Boston added more volumes in the mid-twentieth century by avoiding duplication of the earlier attempt, they too failed to complete the project. The *Joseph Haydn Werke*, the scholarly edition of Haydn's complete works, remains in progress.¹⁷ Thanks to H. C. Robbins Landon, co-editor of the Boston attempt, an excellent edition of the complete symphonies exists, published in both miniature and performance scores between 1965 and 1968.

Concertos

Compared to the richness of the symphonies, Haydn's concertos, most of which were written before 1770, seem like poor cousins, and relatively few have survived.¹⁸ With our inevitable inclination to compare Haydn and Mozart, we have judged the concertos harshly, perhaps unfairly so, considering Mozart's achievements with the medium. Unlike Mozart, who wrote his piano and violin concertos for himself, Haydn, with the exception of early keyboard concertos, wrote his on commission or for the members of his orchestra. He saw no need to invest himself in these three-movement works for soloist and orchestra or to engage the listener as Mozart had, preferring the symphony to achieve that; in fact, in Vienna during the middle of the century, unlike Italy, audiences and hence composers had a marked preference for symphonies.

Haydn's output of concertos, while not comparable to symphonies or string quartets, was nevertheless substantial, and was originally thought to be much larger than has proved to be the case since he did not write many of those attributed to him. He wrote keyboard concertos for organ, harpsichord, and eventually for clavicembalo or fortepiano, which became a serious concert instrument around 1770. For strings he wrote concertos for violin, cello, his patron Nicolaus's favorite baryton (although these are all lost), and even the violone, or contraviolone (the immediate ancestor of the double bass). His wind concertos include those for flute, bassoon, horn, two horns, and trumpet, although most of these too are lost.

His earliest concertos for organ (or harpsichord) and orchestra from c.1750s onwards were perhaps used in his capacity as leader of the orchestra

at the Barmherzige Brüder church in Vienna or organist at the chapel of Count Haugwitz. After the Esterházy appointment he wrote only three keyboard concertos, now for harpsichord or piano, and the last of these, in D (Hob. XVIII: 11), emerged as his finest, with its distinctive thematic material and superior treatment of sonata-ritornello writing. His concertos for string instruments all belong to the Esterházy years, those for violin in all likelihood written for virtuoso lead violinist Luigi Tomasini, and those for cello for Joseph Weigl. Weigl's friendship with Haydn may have had some bearing on the high quality of the Concerto in C (Hob. VIIb: 1), a work believed to be from the early 1760s that remains firmly lodged in the cello repertoire, along with the Concerto in D (Hob. VIIb: 2) from 1783, despite its more conservative approach. The Concerto for Horn in D (Hob. VIIId: 3) of 1762 has an Allegro first movement instead of the usual Moderato, and places extraordinary demands on the player. The most unusual of his concertos are the five for lira organizzate, commissioned in 1785–86 by King Ferdinand IV of Naples. Ferdinand played this instrument, similar to a hurdy-gurdy with a miniature organ lodged in it, with great skill, but since Haydn knew nothing of it, the commission presumably had to be accompanied by instructions on its range and capabilities.

Haydn wrote the Trumpet Concerto in Eb, his last known concerto, in 1796 for his friend Anton Weidinger. At the time the clarino trumpet remained the standard instrument, but various inventors, including Weidinger, were tinkering with keyed trumpets. By 1796 no one had perfected the instrument, and even though Haydn, recently returned from England, may have wished to give Viennese audiences a taste of his new orchestral prowess, the concerto could not be performed. After its eventual premiere in 1800, the *Wiener Zeitung* announced that Weidinger wished “to present to the world for the first time . . . an organized trumpet which he has invented and brought – after seven years of hard and expensive labor – to what he believes may be described as perfection: it contains several keys and will be displayed in a concerto specially written for this instrument by Herr Joseph Haydn.”¹⁹ Haydn endowed this concerto with brilliant passages ranging from trumpet fanfares to moving cantabiles, all with a rich orchestral sound underlying the solo line.

Early symphonies

Griesinger tells us that “in the year 1759 Haydn was appointed in Vienna to be music director to Count Morzin,” and that he composed his first symphony in this position.²⁰ He identifies this work as no. 1, which squares with Haydn's own records, but the date appears to be out by one or possibly

two years. Remaining with Morzin until the prince had squandered his small fortune and had to disband his little orchestra, Haydn wrote at least fifteen symphonies, establishing himself as a leading symphonist by 1760. These early works, sometimes compared with those of Johann Stamitz and others in Mannheim, probably have more in common with Gassmann, a leading composer of symphonies in Vienna until his death in 1774, and even more with Italian opera overtures. No clear line distinguished overtures and symphonies at this time, and the pre-eminence of Italian opera determined the primary influence.

This, along with comparisons with string quartets, led some to speculate that Giovanni Battista Sammartini exerted a strong early influence on Haydn, although Haydn denied this.²¹ The earliest symphonies variously use the overture three-movement format of fast–slow–fast, the expanded four-movement possibility with added minuet, and the approach of starting with a slow movement, using the baroque *di chiesa* style. These pre-Esterházy works are the most neglected of Haydn's symphonies, but their emerging confidence reveals that the striking new approach at Eisenstadt did not emerge from a vacuum.

Haydn's appointment in 1761 to the position of Vice-Kapellmeister to the Esterházy family secured his career as a music director and composer. Post-Enlightenment thought has tended to disparage the working conditions that Haydn accepted in his first contract, signed May 1, 1761, but the language contained nothing unusual for the time. Amid clauses about his responsibilities to Ober-Kapellmeister Gregor Joseph Werner, as well as clothing, conduct, supervision of the musicians, and care of the instruments, his compositional obligations stipulated that he should not "communicate such new compositions to anyone, nor to allow them to be copied, but to retain them wholly for the exclusive use of his Highness."²² For a composer not yet thirty years of age and eager to work, the terms of the contract suggested much more opportunity than restriction.

After the relative economy of means in the Morzin symphonies, Haydn could move to a grander style for the Esterházy's, as his works could now reflect the splendor of the court and benefit from the quality of the band of musicians available to him. While some of the twenty-five symphonies composed between 1761 and 1767 distinctly served to entertain, others opted for a more learned style or combined the two types. Few of these use three movements, as the four-movement symphony now became the standard.

Initially Haydn had a very small ensemble with which to work, no more than thirteen to fifteen players, typically six violins, one viola, one cello, one bass, two oboes, two horns, one bassoon, and occasionally one flute.²³ Horn parts could occasionally be augmented beyond the usual two, as

nos. 13, 31, 39 and 72 use four horns. The musicians themselves all played at an exceptionally high calibre, necessary for performing music on demand at short notice. Haydn had the contractual authority to manage them as he saw fit, but he also immediately realized he needed to secure their loyalty. His first three symphonies for the ensemble, nos. 6–8, “Le matin,” “Le midi,” and “Le soir,” achieved this brilliantly as each one features solo obbligato parts that display individual members of the ensemble to great advantage. According to Dies, Prince Paul Anton “gave Haydn the four times of day [*Tagszeiten*] as a theme for a composition;”²⁴ whether or not the ideas came from the prince, the works themselves were highly original and charted new territory.

No. 6, “Le matin,” opens with an adagio introduction in which a rhythmic rising figure in the first violin is joined by the second violin and then full orchestra, moving from pianissimo to fortissimo, representing the rising sun. The opening allegro theme, marked by two measures of quarter notes in the flute followed by a rapidly rising D major scale, provides material on which other movements can draw. The finale most notably uses this material, also starting with solo flute, now opening with the rising D major scale. Like the first movement, the second also begins with a slow introduction and moves from pianissimo to forte. No. 7, “Le midi,” has a second movement that features a duet between solo violin and cello. Marked “recitativo” at the beginning, and with regular shifts from adagio to allegro, it appears to be in the operatic style of a *scena*, and the vocal style of the solo strings reinforces this impression.

While opera underlies parts of no. 7, the operatic association in no. 8 becomes much more explicit, as Haydn took bold new dramatic steps. Daniel Hertz has drawn connections between a number of passages in the first movement of “Le soir” and Gluck’s “Je n’aimais pas le tabac beaucoup,” a song featured in *Le diable à quatre*, an opera revived in 1759 and well known to Viennese audiences.²⁵ In a fascinating and plausible reading, Richard Will takes this further, suggesting that Gluck’s song triggers a dramatic association with the opera itself, and that the movement portrays the relationship between two of the characters from the opera, the cobbler Jacques and his wife Margot, giving us a domestic, conjugal drama. Her interest in tobacco becomes the issue, after her husband forbids her to use it, and the presentation of contrasting themes representing male and female characters, along with their working-out and resolution, offers up a specific drama.²⁶ From this early stage Haydn perceived the symphony as a composition that could appeal to an audience in a similar way to opera, by being dramatic, and it could best do so with actual references to opera.

Other works from his first five years in the service of the prince also reveal dramatic features, if not as overtly as no. 8. This can involve exchanges of the

comic and serious, as happens in the dialogue-like exchanges in the finale of no. 13. Reference to familiar material could also take various guises, including horn calls associated with the hunt, in no. 13, and even more dramatically in no. 31, the “Horn Signal” Symphony (1765), which also features military and posthorn calls. Around the same time Haydn introduced liturgical associations, as in no. 22, “Le philosophe.” Hertz describes its opening Adagio as a kind of chorale prelude, with a walking bass that looks back to Bach and the Lutheran tradition, and belongs to the tradition of the “church symphony.”²⁷ No. 30, the “Alleluja” Symphony (1765), takes this even further, since it incorporates near the outset a liturgical melody, and continues with the sacred tone.²⁸

The minor mode, church, and theater

Much has been written about the symphonies of 1768–72, a disproportionate number of which are in minor keys, and by now the epithet “Sturm und Drang” has more or less been abandoned as a suitable description for them. While they may have striking features that distance them from the earlier 1760s, neither the minor keys nor the content suggest that they arose from some personal crisis that Haydn may have experienced. Some have found it useful to define these works in the context of a pre- or early-romantic trend, but that has only served to dislodge them even further from the century in which they originated. The term “Sturm und Drang” arises from a novel by F. M. Klinger, from a decade later than the symphonies the term applies to, and the nature of this literary phenomenon bears no resemblance to the content of Haydn’s symphonies. Some of the more recent attempts to characterize these as church symphonies or theater symphonies hit closer to the mark;²⁹ since this group includes both types as well as some that fit into neither, the right epithet remains elusive.

No work defines the church symphony as well as no. 26, the “Lamentation,” which not only incorporates a Gregorian chant familiar to virtually every churchgoer in eighteenth-century Austria, but also turns the symphony into overt drama. In the first movement Haydn quotes the *Cantus Ecclesiasticus Sacrae Historiae Passionis Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* at length, setting up a Passion drama in the same manner as the liturgical source.³⁰ To prepare the listener for this theme, labelled “Chorale,” agitation permeates the opening sixteen measures of the first movement, appropriately in the key of d minor and with syncopation. Continuing this spirit in the second movement, Haydn quotes a lamentation of Jeremiah from the same liturgical collection. The source material in the first movement, with texts for the Evangelist, Christ, and the Vox populi (see mm. 17, 26, and 35 respectively),

in conjunction with the lamentation in the second, turns the symphony into a kind of vocal work without words. The instrumentation also supports this, as the source material always sounds in the oboe and violin II parts.³¹ Liturgical gravitation and theater occur in the same work. Another work from this time, no. 49, “La passione,” similarly directs the listeners’ thoughts to Holy Week, and thematic material here may also have plainchant origins.

As unusual and daring as some of the symphonies in minor keys are, nothing surpasses no. 45, the “Farewell” (1772), for originality and provocation. The familiar story said to have inspired the symphony, related by Dies in great detail,³² tells of the musicians wishing to leave Eszterháza and return to their families in Vienna. They persuaded Haydn to give a musical message to Prince Nicolaus, and he accomplished this in the finale, with instructions for the musicians to blow out their candles and leave when their parts end, leaving only two violins to complete the work. There appears to be no compelling reason why Dies did not get most of the details correct, but his story ignores even greater musical significance than the farewell drama staged in the coda of the finale. Aside from the cyclical nature of the work already noted, the first movement proves to be highly dramatic and provocative in its disruption of formal expectations.³³ The exposition lacks a second group, which arrives in the development with a new theme. The development develops nothing, as that falls in the recapitulation. With this manipulation of expectation, the Prince’s curiosity may have been as piqued by this movement as by the finale.

For many past writers on Haydn, the symphonies of the 1770s, completely lacking in minor keys, seem like a return to the symphonic dark ages of celebratory appeal and enforced popularity. Nothing could be further from the truth. In exploring the expressive possibilities of his symphonies, Haydn had earlier quoted all sorts of source material, aligning symphonies with liturgical drama or opera, and devising new levels of complexity in thematic working, tonal exploration and formal flexibility. Minor keys had offered interesting possibilities, but we clearly overrate their expressive power. Just as Mozart could present the deepest feelings in major keys in a work such as *Le nozze di Figaro*, Haydn now proceeded in major keys, with no deterrence to his achievement of beauty or the sublime. The next decade proved every bit as critical to his development as the previous one, and with the marked increase of his operatic activities, especially with the new and intensive phase beginning in 1776, it comes as no surprise that his symphonies gravitate more towards opera and the theater in general.

A useful characterization of the symphonies from this time has been provided by Elaine Sisman, with special focus on no. 60 (1774), “Il distratto,” made up of the six-movement incidental music (overture, four entr’actes and finale) for the performance of the comic play *Le distrait* by Regnard.³⁴

The possibility exists that Haydn wrote other incidental music at this time, perhaps even for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, and that various symphonic movements served the combined purpose of symphonies and operatic overtures or incidental music for plays. That the first movement of no. 63 is an altered version of the overture to *Il mondo della luna* helps to make the point, and it may be the case, although not all agree, that the "La Roxelana" epithet for no. 63 points to incidental music.³⁵

The movements or entr'actes of no. 60 parallel the appropriate parts of *Le distrait* to which they correspond, and this begins as early as the overture, which, in the apparent distractedness of aspects of the music, presumably introduces us musically to the absent-minded protagonist. Transitional material appears to lose its way, as though Haydn lost track of where he was, and derailment of the forward drive continues throughout the movement, culminating with an apparent quotation from the opening of the "Farewell" Symphony,³⁶ a movement that sets the standard for derailment. This and other works from the 1770s and early 1780s leave no doubt that Haydn believed a symphony could engage an audience very much as an opera could, or even literary works for the stage.

Along with the greater dramatic appeal of his symphonies came a new ability to reach audiences beyond the Eszterháza estates, in the form of a new contract he signed on January 1, 1779, which dropped the restrictive language of his original contract. Now he could accept outside commissions, sell his music to publishers, or arrange for performances elsewhere. Nicolaus may have had various reasons to loosen things up after almost two decades of faithful service from his Kapellmeister, and not the least of these may have been that Haydn had become an international sensation, another jewel in his patron's crown well worth displaying widely. If the prince's interest in symphonic music flagged at this time, concert organizations throughout Europe could not get enough of Haydn, and he could now write works specifically for them. In 1782 he wrote a set of three, nos. 76–78, aimed towards a publisher or a concert organization, probably in England.³⁷ With no. 78 he wrote a symphony in a minor key for the first time in a decade, and another minor one came shortly thereafter, no. 80, also belonging to a set of three. The serious d minor opening of this work stands in marked contrast to the lighter second group beginning at m. 25, and especially the closing theme with its comic Scotch snap rhythm (mm. 57–64). This contrast of comic and serious had by now been elevated to a dramatic principle.

During Haydn's Esterházy tenure the size of his orchestra steadily grew. While still at Eisenstadt he drew extra players from the church orchestra or other local musicians, building an orchestra of close to twenty players, but

at Eszterháza that number increased as the violins were augmented, and eventually flute, trumpets and timpani became regular fixtures. During the 1770s and 1780s the orchestra included more virtuoso players, and turnover occurred frequently; by 1780 Haydn could depend on having at least twenty string players at his disposal, and sometimes more.

Paris and English symphonies

By 1785 Haydn found himself no longer needing to reach out to an international audience since that audience approached him with commissions, in the first instance from Count d'Ogny for six symphonies to be performed in Paris by the Concert de la Loge Olympique. Now he could write for a particular audience, certainly sophisticated,³⁸ with the knowledge that justice would be done to his works from the fine orchestra of fifty-five to sixty members. The concert society, as the name implies, was a masonic organization, and since Haydn's own initiation to the lodge "Zur wahren Eintracht" took place at exactly this time, he may have had additional impetus to present these works in a certain way. His enlightened attitudes appear to have been influenced by his masonic friends such as Greiner, Sonnenfels, and Born, and these symphonies may have seemed the ideal place to put these principles into practice.³⁹ These symphonies surpass his previous ones not only in their musical breadth and scope but also in their new focus on an intelligible dramatic process. In no way should that belittle earlier works, as these symphonies clearly acknowledge a debt to their predecessors; in fact, one of them, no. 85, "La Reine," more or less quotes the opening of the "Farewell" Symphony, in *f* minor instead of *f*[#] minor, perhaps drawing a connection with a work that points forward.

The order of composition remains unclear; the Parisian publisher Imbault issued them as 83, 87, 85, 82, 86, and 84, although Haydn recommended something else to his Viennese publisher Artaria, who opted to give them in two sets of three as 82–87. No. 83 appears to be one of the first, and its first movement reveals admirably if bizarrely the new approach taken by Haydn in engaging his audience in a process of focused and active listening. He sets up the drama epigrammatically in the first four notes of his *g* minor theme – *G*–*B*^b–*C*[#]–*D* – reverting to something sounding as though it could come from plainchant, thus giving it an even stronger focus. Within these four notes consonance and dissonance pull against each other, the notes on the beat giving a tritone while the first, second, and fourth notes provide the tonic triad. The first three notes, emphasized by *forzato* marks, offer a broken diminished chord, and resolution on the fifth degree comes as a weaker afterthought.

Example 7.1 Symphony no. 83, first movement, mm. 176–93

The dramatic problem contained in these notes becomes the focus of the movement, and Haydn highlights the issue in the recapitulation, strikingly drawing the listener's attention to it, demonstrating overwhelmingly that this section will serve a critical dramatic function.⁴⁰ With the fermata over a whole-note diminished chord at m. 181, he arrests all forward progress, bringing us to the precise point of dramatic resolution. After the fermata he states the problematic tritone figure twice and then gives the solution in the oboes (Ex. 7.1), thereby demonstrating one of the most fundamental enlightened principles in purely musical but dramatic terms: opposing forces can coexist, and in human terms the principle of tolerance has been put forward.

The great success of the "Paris" Symphonies led to another commission from d'Ogny, nos. 90–92, and nos. 88–89 also capitalized on his new currency. Another commission at this time takes us back to earlier church symphonies, orchestral pieces programmatically representing the last words of Christ, written for the cathedral in Cadíz, Spain. In a letter to William Forster he emphasized the premium he placed on their accessibility to the listener: "Each Sonata, or rather each setting of the text, is expressed only by instrumental music, but in such a way that it creates the most profound impression even on the most inexperienced listener."⁴¹ With the *Seven Last Words* he embraces programmaticism at an extreme level, without falling into the traps of trite representation,⁴² achieving what he considered his most successful work.⁴³

An invitation to Haydn from the violinist and concert producer Johann Peter Salomon to come to London and present six new symphonies and other works became feasible after the death of Prince Nicolaus in 1790. On 15 December he and Salomon left Vienna, reaching Dover on New Year's Day 1791. Unlike his commissions from Paris, with everything transacted from afar, he now could live in the city for which he would write the symphonies – a matter of great significance. Always conscious of his audience and the need to adapt his works to it, he now acquired an awareness of English musical

culture from professionals such as Salomon, from his many new friends, and from attending concerts. In letters back to Vienna he spoke of revisions made to conform to English taste, including the previously written Symphony no. 91, of which he claimed to “have to change many things for the English public.”⁴⁴ In the same letter he noted the need to make changes to one of the symphonies written for London, presumably no. 93: “I intend to alter the last movement of it, and to improve it, since it is too weak compared with the first. I was convinced of this myself, and so was the public, when it was played the first time last Friday.”⁴⁵ How he measured this, one cannot say, but the idea itself suggests interesting possibilities for his approach to the English symphonies in general.

Intent on gaining the approval of this audience in whose midst he now resided, to say nothing of coming out ahead of his former pupil Pleyel at the rival Professional Concerts, also at Hanover Square, he appeared to follow a fairly consistent strategy in his six symphonies written for his first two London seasons, 1791–92. One notes a general progression from works with a more popular appeal to those that challenge the listening skills of the audience more intensively. That challenge, as with early symphonies, does not reveal itself in musical complexity alone, but also, as no. 83 had, draws the listener into contemplation of enlightened principles. For the first season of twelve subscription concerts, advertised by Salomon to the “nobility and gentry,” he opened with an existing work, no. 92, and then moved to new ones, nos. 96 and 95 (the only English symphony in a minor key and lacking a slow introduction). The 1792 season challenges listeners even more with the innovations of nos. 93, 98, 94 and 97. In 1791 Haydn had a full orchestra of about forty players at his disposal at Hanover Square, including two each of flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, trumpets, as well as timpani. By the final season that number had grown to sixty, and included clarinets.

He returned to Vienna in 1792, but back in England for the 1794 season, he challenged his audience with new levels of complexity, such as a linkage between the slow introduction and transitions in the first movement of no. 99, thematic connections among the movements of no. 101, or the unstable arrival of the new key in the first movement of no. 100. Haydn had shrewdly insisted that his symphonies appear only on the second half of concerts, allowing his to surpass the works heard first. In 1794, with nos. 99, 101, and 100, reviewers were stunned by the originality of these works. One in the *Morning Chronicle* on March 5 expressed concern that the composer might repeat himself, but “we are every time mistaken. Nothing can be more original than the subject of the first movement; and having found a happy subject, no man knows like HAYDN how to produce incessant variety, without once departing from it.”⁴⁶ In earlier works Haydn had established that the slow introduction did much more than provide a rhetorical opening

Example 7.2 Symphony no. 103, first movement, mm. 2–5 and 73–74

Adagio

a. 2 d.b.

b. 73

vn. I

vc.

f

Example 7.3 Symphony no. 103, first movement, mm. 79–82

79

vn. I

to what would follow. Thematic material, tonal procedures, and even metric ambiguity now linked introductions to subsequent material, and in no. 101 he goes well beyond that. Thematic links now travel across the Minuet and the highly complex finale.

Audiences in 1795 must have been as taken by nos. 102, 103, and 104 as audiences remain today, and all of these place high demands on the listeners' focused attention. Complexity begins in the slow introductions, sometimes with contrapuntal working of thematic material, and this carries forward to the rest of the first movement and beyond. This counterpoint can be intense in transitions and even more so in developments, as in no. 102 (mm. 209–16), where as many as four or five previously heard motifs or themes interact simultaneously. Slow introductions in these late symphonies often set a distinctive character, using features of funeral music from both folk and liturgical sources to establish striking contrasts with the bright material in fast sections to follow.⁴⁷ In no. 103, for example, immediately after the opening drumroll, the first four notes model those of the “Dies irae” plainchant. As the line unfolds, it sets up an odd metric ambiguity, written in a triple meter, but with nothing to suggest that duple would not be just as appropriate (Ex. 7.2a). In the exposition the dominant key arrives at m. 73 almost unnoticed, and the extraordinary treatment of thematic material here seems equally obscure. The contour of the line in mm. 73–74 parallels the Adagio introduction almost precisely, evoking its funeral character, but at the same time the rhythm suggests a cheerful dance (Ex. 7.2b).⁴⁸ This

Example 7.4 *Symphony no. 103, first movement, mm. 201–14*

The musical score for Example 7.4 consists of two staves. The first staff, starting at measure 201, is in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature. It is marked 'Adagio' and 'p'. Above the staff, there are markings for 'timp.' and 'd.b.'. The second staff, starting at measure 209, is in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature. It is marked 'Tempo 1^{mo}' and 'f'. Above the staff, there is a marking for 'vn.1'. The key signature for both staves has two flats.

dance character anticipates the dance-like theme which follows, at m. 79 (Ex. 7.3).⁴⁹ And like the metric ambiguity of the introduction, the dance character places a triple meter against the written 6/8 held in the lower strings and bassoon.

When material similar to the introduction appears at m. 111 of the development, it again can easily slip by unnoticed – a situation reversed in the recapitulation. Now twelve measures of new fortissimo material lead to a fermata, giving the listener no choice but to be alert. With the return of the drumroll and the first two phrases of the Adagio introduction, Haydn commands our full attention. At m. 214 the 6/8 *Allegro con spirito* returns, bringing back the notable material of mm. 73–74, making it impossible to ignore what may have gone unnoticed earlier (Ex. 7.4). Here Haydn surely takes the listener by the hand, following Shaftesbury's dictum, giving a lesson in listening. Now he offers an extraordinarily sophisticated fusion of opposites, allowing them to coexist in this most potent two-measure line, again reinforcing the notion of tolerance. With these late symphonies Haydn reached not only the highest possible achievement of musical mastery, but he also set the standard for music addressing social and spiritual issues at the deepest possible level.