

Chapter 12: Concert Life Lifts Off, 1725–1800: Franz Joseph Haydn

I. Introduction

- A. The career of Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) demonstrates increasing prominence of the symphony.
- B. Haydn is known as the “Father of the Symphony,” with over one hundred examples in that genre.

II. The birth of the symphony

- A. By the eighteenth century, a “sinfonia” had come to mean what the French called *ouverture*: the instrumental opener to an opera.
 - 1. By the end of the eighteenth century, the symphony was a stand-alone genre, and over sixteen thousand have survived. It also had moved from background music to the main event.

III. Modern concert life is born

- A. The first significant European concert series was the *Concert Spirituel* of Philidor, which opened in Paris in 1725.
 - 1. Vocal and instrumental music appeared in these concerts.
 - 2. The sinfonias of Sammartini are representative. See Anthology 2-8.
- B. As the century wore on, the symphony became established as the most important genre of instrumental music.

IV. The Mannheim orchestra: “an army of generals”

- A. In the capital of Mannheim, semiweekly musical concerts were presented in lieu of an opera house.
- B. Mozart visited Mannheim in 1777 and remarked to his father that the orchestra of more than sixty members contained famous performers. He described it as an “army of generals.”
- C. The leader of this orchestra was a Bohemian violinist, Stamitz.
 - 1. Among the abilities of this group were
 - a) Quasi-military discipline
 - b) Precise crescendos and other dynamic contrasts
- D. Such skilled and practiced performers inspired the composition of concert symphonies.

V. Franz Joseph Haydn

- A. The number and quality of Haydn’s symphonies clearly designates him as the most influential composer of symphonies in the eighteenth century.
 - 1. He standardized the genre.
 - 2. He made it a public genre.
 - 3. He enlarged it in both size and scope, and his symphonies are the earliest staples in the modern concert repertory.
- B. Haydn’s talent as a singer was recognized when he was six; at age eight he went to sing in St. Stephen’s Cathedral, Vienna.
 - 1. In Vienna, Haydn attracted the attention of Empress Maria Theresa. When his voice broke (at seventeen, not unusual in the eighteenth century), he lost his position.

- C. He lived in strained circumstances for several years, taking odd musical jobs, playing violin on the streets, and studying composition (including Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*).
1. Haydn's earliest compositions date from this period.
 2. He also composed chamber instrumental pieces, which are now classified as string quartets.
 3. Early commercial success with these instrumental pieces (Opp. 1 and 2) enabled Haydn to secure a position with a noble family, that of Count Morzin.
- D. Haydn's years with the Esterházy family
1. At age twenty-eight, Haydn went to work for the Esterházy family. He remained with this family for almost fifty years.
 2. The Esterházy family had two main residences, one in Vienna and one in Hungary: Haydn worked at both.
 3. Haydn's typical duties included regular performances that included one opera and two concerts per week, with daily chamber music and music for special occasions. He also wrote music for the prince's private amusement (on the baryton, the prince's instrument of choice).
 4. The working conditions for Esterházy were ideal.
- E. Haydn's Symphony No. 45: The "Farewell" Symphony
1. Symphony No. 45 was first performed in November 1772 at Prince Nikolaus's summer palace, resulting in a unique work.
 2. The symphonies from the mid-1770s are boldly experimental and have been traditionally associated with the literary movement known as *Sturm und Drang*.
 3. Symphony No. 45 represents *Sturm und Drang* in several ways.
 - a) The key of F# minor is unique among works from this period.
 - b) The mood is not light and airy, but mysterious.
 - c) The final movement has a strange form, and it is famous for having the instrumentalists drop out.
 - d) That Haydn could communicate with his prince through instrumental music signals a new conception of the medium.
 4. Instrumental music was just beginning to displace vocal in cultural prestige. That potential was newly realized via harmonically governed forms articulated through the clever manipulation of thematic material using what is now described by the term *thematische Arbeit* (thematic work).
- F. String quartets and concertos
1. Haydn returned to writing string quartets in the early 1780s, after abandoning the genre for almost ten years, issuing the Op. 33 quartets in 1782.
 2. Haydn left several concertos for a variety of instruments. Some remain in the repertory today: trumpet in Eb, keyboard in D, two cello concertos.
- G. The symphony composer in London
1. When Prince Nikolaus died in 1790, Haydn moved to Vienna, where he joined with Salomon to produce a series of concerts in London.

2. One result of the London excursions was a series of symphonies, beginning with No. 92.
 - a) These were large-scale pieces.

H. Sonata form

1. By the mid-1780s Haydn had established the symphonic form: fast opening movement, slow second, dancelike third, and fast finale.
2. The first movement of mature Haydn symphonies is in sonata form.
3. Often, he begins with a slow introduction that functions as the original *sinfonias to operas*—telling the audience that it is time to begin.
4. The first and last parts, similar in thematic content and layout, were later called the “exposition” and the “recapitulation.” The middle part is called the “development.”
 - a) The development tends to be short.

I. The “London” Symphony No. 104

1. Symphony No. 104 demonstrates how careful one must be in assuming all sonata form is the same.
2. The second theme is the same as the first (no contrasting themes).
3. All of Haydn’s late symphonies are in four movements.
4. The second movement of No. 104 is in ternary form.
5. The third movement is a minuet and trio, which is almost always the case for this period.
6. The final movement is often a rondo, although Haydn and others combined elements of sonata form with it.
7. The finale of No. 104, however, is not a sonata-rondo or rondo, but another sonata-form movement, with an extended coda. The weight of the final movement is something in Haydn’s late symphonies that points to the future.
8. Symphony No. 104 was a commercial success.
9. Haydn’s late symphonies become the earliest in the canon.

J. Haydn’s final years

1. In London, Haydn interacted most frequently with nobility and gentry and considered moving to London at the invitation of George III.
2. While in London, Haydn experienced a large Handel festival and was inspired to compose something similar for Austrians. He chose to write *The Creation*, based on texts from the Bible and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.
 - a) The work includes da capo arias and contrapuntal choruses, which were considered old-fashioned in 1798.
 - b) The opening is quite new, however, in its attempt to recreate the chaos that precedes the moment when God created heaven and earth.