

Haydn eBook

Haydn

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Haydn eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	4
Page 1.....	5
Page 2.....	6
Page 3.....	7
Page 4.....	8
Page 5.....	9
Page 6.....	10
Page 7.....	11
Page 8.....	12
Page 9.....	13
Page 10.....	15
Page 11.....	16
Page 12.....	17
Page 13.....	18
Page 14.....	19
Page 15.....	20
Page 16.....	21
Page 17.....	22
Page 18.....	23
Page 19.....	24
Page 20.....	25
Page 21.....	26
Page 22.....	27



Page 23..... 28
Page 24..... 29
Page 25..... 30
Page 26..... 31
Page 27..... 32
Page 28..... 33
Page 29..... 34
Page 30..... 35
Page 31..... 37
Page 32..... 39
Page 33..... 40
Page 34..... 41
Page 35..... 42
Page 36..... 43
Page 37..... 45



Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
JOSEPH HAYDN		1
CHAPTER II		5
CHAPTER III		9
CHAPTER IV		13
CHAPTER V		20
CHAPTER VI		24
CHAPTER VII		30
CHAPTER VIII		32
CHAPTER IX		34
HAYDN'S PRINCIPAL COMPOSITIONS		36
BOOKS ABOUT HAYDN		36
BELL'S MINIATURE SERIES OF MUSICIANS		36
BY THE SAME AUTHOR.		37



Page 1

JOSEPH HAYDN

It is, as a rule, inexpedient to begin a book with the peroration. Children are spared the physic of the moral till they have sucked in the sweetness of the tale. Adults may draw from a book what of good there is in it, and close it before reaching the chapter usually devoted to fine writing. But the case of Haydn is extraordinary. One can only sustain interest in a biography of the man by an ever-present sense that he is scarcely to be written about. All an author can do is, in few or many words, to put a conundrum to the reader—a conundrum that cannot even be stated in exciting terms. This apparition and wonder-worker of the eighteenth century, Franz Joseph Haydn, is compact of paradoxes and contradictions. Born a peasant, and remaining in thought and speech a peasant all his days, he became the friend of princes, dukes, and, generally speaking, very high society indeed—and this in days when class distinctions had to be observed. He effected a revolution in music, and revolutionists must have daring; and save in music he showed no sign of unusual daring. His shaping and handling of new forms called for high intellect, and he displayed no intellect whatever in any other way—nothing beyond a canny, cunning shrewdness. Until he was sixty his life was a plodding one of dull regularity and routine; only his later adventures in England are in themselves of interest. The bare facts of his existence might be given in a few pages. Look at him from any point of view, and we see nothing but his simplicity; yet it is hard to believe that a man who achieved such great things was in reality simple. If only we had his inner spiritual biography! And even then one wonders whether we would have much. If Haydn actually knew his own secret—which I take leave to doubt—he certainly kept it. “The daemon of music,” said Wagner, “revealing itself through the mind of a child”—which tells us nothing. In reading his Life we must perpetually bear in mind the mighty changes he wrought in and for music, else we shall not read far. Wherefore, first roughly to outline his achievement is the reason why I open with a peroration of a sort.

Haydn found music in the eighteenth-century stage, and carried it on to the nineteenth-century stage—in some respects a very advanced nineteenth-century stage. The problem he had to solve was as easy as that set by Columbus to the wiseacres, when once it was worked. It was how to combine organic unity of form and continuity with dramatic variety and the expressiveness of simple heartfelt song. From the date of the invention of music written and sung in parts, a similar problem had been set successive generations of musicians, and solved by each according to its needs and lights. At first words were indispensable; they were, if not the backbone of the music, at least the string on which the pearls might be strung. The first veritable

Page 2

composers—in setting, for instance, the words of the Mass—took for a beginning a fragment of Church melody, or, to the great scandal of the ecclesiastics, secular melody. Call this bit A, and say it was sung by Voice I.; Voice II. took it up in a different key, Voice I. continuing with something fresh; then Voice III. took it in turn, Voices I. and II. continuing either with entirely fresh matter, or Voice II. following in the steps of Voice I. And so on, either until the whole piece was complete or a section ended; but the end of one section was the jumping-off place for the commencement of another, which was spun out in exactly the same way. This method of “imitation” was employed by all the polyphonic composers. Continuity was assured; lovely or unlovely harmonic dissonances were always arising, and being resolved through the collisions and onward movement of parts; the music, both melodically and harmonically, could be as expressive as the particular composer’s powers allowed. But the unity was the unity of a number of pieces of wood of varying length laid so as to overlap and nailed together; the superficial unity was due to the words; the real, essential unity depended on all the music being the sincere expression of a steady emotion—in those days religious emotion. Thus were attained the motet forms and the Mass, and, when the method was applied to secular words, the madrigal.

The earlier instrumental pieces were built after the same fashion—see the “fancies” and organ compositions of the time; but in these there were no words either to give the impulse or hold the bits together. With the fugue, music, unaided by words, was held together by its own innate strength; it became a self-sustaining One subject was generally taken; others—oftenest one, sometimes more—were added; all the subjects were passed about from part to part until the end of the composition, with the interspersions of passages called “episodes” for the sake of “variety.” Here there was unity, continuity, with a vengeance. It was of the very essence of the fugue that the motion should never be arrested; if it seemed to halt for a moment, then, as in the older music, the stopping-place was the jumping-off place for a fresh start. All the severer men wrote in this form, most of them displaying marvellous mathematical—and some of them, alas! mechanical—ingenuity; a few of them, Bach towering high above the rest, attained a full and truthful expression of deep feeling. Bach, for the organ alone, raised sublime architectural structures, unapproachable, to use Schumann’s word, in their magnificence. But the underlying feeling was always the same throughout; it might wax or wane in intensity: its character did not change. The themes, once announced, were rigid and unalterable; the music had always to be more or less like “a tune tied to a post.” Dramatic changes of mood had no place. So later, a voice had to be found for shifting, complex, theatrically conflicting



Page 3

moods—states of mind characteristic of the modern and not of the bewigged world. When Haydn was still young the problem composers were more or less at random trying to solve was the creation of a new form of music and a new kind of music to fill the form. Neither the old form nor the old style would serve; the naive dance-forms were too short. The content had to be as poignantly expressive, as direct in its appeal, as a folk-song; the different passages uttering the different moods had somehow to be welded together into a coherent whole—in one way or another dramatic climaxes and changes had to be arranged in an unbroken, logical, apparently inevitable sequence. I do not say the composers knew what they were after; on the contrary, as in the beginnings of anything new in any art, they simply were vaguely groping after something, they did not by any means realise what.

During the period when the polyphonic writers were pouring out their most glorious and living stuff, in the first lame, crude fugues the medium was being prepared for the triumphs of Handel and Bach; and in the same way, while Bach was writing the G minor and A minor fugues (I am not speaking of vocal music) some smaller men were working at what was destined to grow into the symphony, sonata and quartet. These terms are used here in their present-day signification. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such words as symphony and overture, and suite and sonata, were interchangeable; but that does not at all concern us here. The symphony or sonata or quartet form is what these early groups of movements led up to. That these groups of movements originated in the theatre is quite probable; this is indicated by the mere fact that the word “overture” was frequently used to describe them. When the fugue was in its fullest maturity composers were turning overtures out in vast quantities. Our own Arne tried his hand at them, and no one looking at *his* would dream that the sonata form was so nearly ripe at the time. Emanuel and Johann Christian Bach wrote them, and from these two Haydn got the hint which he turned to such splendid account. Abel, Stamitz and Wagenseil wrote them, and achieved nothing in particular. These groups consisted of three or four movements, and we need not linger long over them. It goes without saying that all the movements were short; they consisted either of simple tunes or of series of harmonic progressions broken up into figures or patterns. Of real development and climax there is none; of such things as well-defined, characteristic first and second subjects there is little sign. The themes were of the formal mathematical type developed during the fugal period—a type that “worked” easily, and in a way effectively, in the fugue itself, but was unnecessary and, indeed, tiresome when contrapuntal working was not the aim and object. The endless variants on this kind of thing, for example—

[Illustration: some bars of music]

Page 4

were simply a snare, and kept writers from seeing the importance of singing and singable melody in the coming style. To show the difference between the old and the new at once, let me here give two bits of themes from Mozart and Haydn. They are in appearance not so far removed from the contrapuntal type of theme, and while they sing themselves they yet served their inventors capitally for contrapuntal treatment.

[Illustration: some bars of music]

Numberless sonatas were written about the same time. Either the subjects were contrapuntal, formal, in build, or consisted of patterns made out of broken chord-series. Domenico Scarlatti got some wonderful results; but his music simply tickles the ear for a moment: meaning it has none. Polyphonic music of every sort had now to go for a while; monodic music was coming in. But before it could come in with any degree of security something else had to come and something else to go. Up till now the old idea of modes had remained strong, despite Sebastian Bach and his marvellous use of chromatic harmonies. It had to yield to the modern idea of key; a sense of key relationships had to be developed—much, at first all, depended on that. The new idea, hinted at by Emanuel Bach, and first seized upon by Haydn, was that a continuous stream of melody—not necessarily always in the top or treble part—should run through a movement, and, whatever the interest of the accompanying parts, should always be of the first importance. For his inspiration, as well as many of his actual themes, Haydn went to his native folk-dances and folk-songs; he brought in the fresh air from the wilds, and the now dusty contrapuntalism was blown out never again to return. We can see above the difference between the full-bottomed wig theme and the newer kind; to show, on the other hand, how near Haydn stood to Beethoven let me give bits of themes from each composer.

[Illustration: some bars of music]

With the disappearance of the contrapuntal theme coincides the end of purely contrapuntal “working” or development. The new kind I shall describe later in its proper place. For the present all that need be said is that here again key relationship was of the first importance, as we shall see. Meantime, in this peroration I have sought to outline what Haydn did. For, let there be no mistake, it was Haydn and no other who brought about the change. If he was not the first to write in something very like modern sonata or symphony form, he was the first to see its full possibilities. Had he written no symphonies, but only quartets, his achievement would have been none the less remarkable, and none the less valuable to Mozart and Beethoven, for in many respects the quartet and the symphony of the eighteenth century were the same thing, and Mozart declared that it was from Haydn he learnt to write quartets.

This, then, is what Haydn did, and I shall now describe shortly what we must call his career while he was working it out.



Page 5

CHAPTER II

1732-1761

The first period of Haydn's life is marked by the two above dates—that of his entry into this world and that of his entry into the service of Prince Anton Esterhazy. He was born, then, in 1732, “between March 31 and April 1.” As there is no “between” possible, either the Haydn family had no clock or were averse to stating definitely that their son was born on All Fool's Day. They need not have worried, for, however simple Haydn might be, he was only once in his whole life a fool, which is more than can be said for most men, great or small. But while he was about it, there was no lack of completeness in Haydn's folly, and he felt the consequences of it all his days. The place of his birth was originally called Tristnik, translated into German, Rohrau, then (whatever it may be now) a sleepy old-world village on the banks of the Leitha, in the very heart of a Croatian settlement in Hungary. The Leitha at Rohrau divides Hungary from Austria. Haydn's father, Mathias Haydn, said to have been a master-wheelwright, came from Hainburg, near to the Danube, and some little distance from Rohrau. More cannot be said of his ancestors than that for some generations they had been hard-working, honest folk of the peasant class, given to music, but by no means a family of musicians like the Bachs. His mother was born Maria Koller, and it has been suggested that the name is a variant or corruption of the Croatian Kolar, meaning a wheelwright. Perhaps she thought that, bearing such a name, she must marry Mathias, a wheelwright. The point is that this fact, if fact it be, is another indication or proof of Haydn's Croatian descent. It seems, indeed, to be established that by blood he was pure Slav, the name being formerly spelt Hajdgn. It is just as well for our tongues that it was changed. Franz Joseph (he dropped the Franz) was the second of twelve children, the only other worth noting being Michael (in full, Johann Michael), who became a famous musician in his day, and a friend of the Mozarts in Salzburg. Maria, the mother, died in 1754, the father in 1763.

It has always seemed to me the great composers had fine luck in being born so long ago, before the towns had grown big and dirty, before the locomotive and motor-car had denied the beautiful earth, and stinking factories floundered over all the lands. Carlyle rightly grows eloquent on the value of the sweet country air and sights and sounds to young Teufelsdröckh, and Haydn must have taken impressions of sunrises, sunsets, midday splendours, and the ever-plashing river flowing to the far-away sea, that afterwards went to the making of his most wonderful music. He had to go out early to fight his way in the world; only six years of peaceful village life, free from care and responsibility, were allowed him. Those first years, I take it, were happy enough. Mathias was only, it is true, a wheelwright, and in time there



Page 6

were a dozen mouths to feed. But we hear of him and Maria making music only in the evenings; his days were more profitably occupied. It goes very much without saying that he was not rich—in what age or clime are working wheelwrights rich?—but he cannot be called poor. Poverty is a comparative term; even to-day peasants feel its biting teeth only when they desert or are driven from their country-side, and make for the overcrowded towns. Joseph, but for a few accidents, might have remained a peasant all his days, and never faced what he would consider hardship. The first accident was his voice, which was undoubtedly of singular beauty; the second was an extraordinary musical aptitude, which led him to sing expressively and perfectly in tune the airs he heard his father and mother sing. Mathias, by the way, accompanied himself on the harp; and Joseph, long before he had a fiddle of his own, imitated the fiddling of his elders with two bits of wood, so the family orchestra was complete. The last accident was the arrival of one Frankh, a distant relative. This was long before the magical feats of the baby Mozart had set every grasping parent staring for signs of musical precocity in his children. But Mathias undoubtedly wanted to do his best for his boy, and Joseph himself must have had ambition of a sort—witness his endeavours to play the fiddle without a fiddle to play—and when Frankh undertook to place the boy in a choir and teach him music, the offer was joyfully accepted. So he went to Hainburg, never to return to Rohrau until he was an old and celebrated man.

Nothing need be recorded of his life in Hainburg save that Frankh worked him hard. Indeed, much later Haydn declared himself thankful to Frankh for forming in him the habit of working hard. He sang, played the fiddle and harpsichord, and went to school; and suddenly one George Reutter came on the scene. He came, heard, and was conquered by Haydn's voice. He was Hofcomposer and Kapellmeister at St. Stephen's Church in Vienna, and he took the boy on the same terms as those on which Frankh had brought him away from Rohrau. To Vienna Haydn went, was entered in the Cantorei of St. Stephen's, and there for some years he sang in the choir. In return he was taught reading, writing and arithmetic, religion and Latin. He had excellent masters for singing and for violin and harpsichord; but he had no teaching in theory. Reutter gave him only two lessons, and he was left without guidance to cover as much music-paper as he could get hold of. But he stuck grimly to the task of making himself an efficient composer, and worked out his own salvation. Reutter, having secured him for his voice, took no interest in him, and when the voice went Haydn had to go too. That happened in 1745. His brother Michael came, with a voice superior to Joseph's; Joseph's broke, and the Empress said his singing was like a cock's crowing. Michael sang a solo so beautifully as to win a present of 24 ducats, and since it was evident that the services of St. Stephen's could go on without Joseph, Reutter waited for a chance of getting rid of Joseph. So Joseph, though far from wishing to oblige, must needs play a practical joke, and was ignominiously spanked and turned out into the streets.



Page 7

With both Frankh and Reutter he had had a hard enough time—plenty of work, not too much food, and no petting—but now he learnt what hard times really meant. He faced them with plenty of courage. A chorister of St. Michael's gave him shelter; some warmhearted person—to whom be all praise—lent him the vast sum of 140 florins—say L7; he got a few pupils who paid him two florins a month. He must have toiled like a slave, in a wet, cold garret, and often without sufficient to eat. Yet, as in everything he undertook, dogged did it. He never became a splendid executant, like Bach and Handel before him, and Mozart and Beethoven immediately after, but he must have been head and shoulders above the ordinary musical practitioner.

His first opportunity came when he made the acquaintance of one Felix Kurz, a well-known comic actor, for whom he wrote the comic opera, *Der Neue Krumme Teufel*. This, judging from the places it was played at, seems to have had quite a vogue. The music is lost; I have never seen the words. But through this operetta or pantomime with songs he appears to have been introduced to Metastasio, who was, of course, a mighty great man at that epoch—a kind of Scribe. Anyhow, Metastasio was superintending the education of the two daughters of a Spanish family, the de Martines, and Haydn was engaged to teach the elder music. Metastasio brought him to the notice of Porpora—then quite as important a person as Metastasio himself—and Porpora made Haydn an offer. Haydn was to clean the boots and do other household jobs, and he was to accompany when Porpora gave lessons. In return, he was to have lessons from Porpora and to be fed and clothed. He accepted, and went off with his new master to Mannersdorf.

His service with Porpora brought him innumerable advantages. If he had lowly duties to attend to, that amounted to nothing. He lived in the eighteenth century, not in the nineteenth or twentieth. He was not regarded as a clever musician forced to do lackey's work; he was a lackey—or, at least, a peasant—given a chance of making himself a clever musician. In those days birth and breeding counted for much—everything. If a man could not boast of these, then he must have money; and even money would not always fetch him everything. The Court musicians were classed lower than domestic servants, and generally paid less. Now and again a triumphant, assertive personality like Handel would break through all the rules of etiquette; but even Handel could have done little without his marvellous finger-skill—for he was reckoned finest amongst the European players of his time—and with his fingers Haydn—we have his own confession for it—was never extraordinary. He could not extemporise as Handel, and Bach in more restricted circles, had done, nor as Mozart and Beethoven were soon to do. Beethoven won social status for the musician tribe, but Beethoven, while as brilliant an executant as Handel, also had the advantage of



Page 8

reaching manhood just when the upset of the French Revolution was destroying all old-world notions. Even in old-fashioned Germany the Rights of Man were asserting themselves. In England, for many a long day afterwards, the musician had no higher standing than Haydn had. The few who mixed with the Great were mainly charlatans of the type of Sir George Smart, and they took mighty pains to be of humble behaviour in the presence of their betters.

Haydn did remarkably well in the petty pigtail courts of Austria. He probably considered himself lucky, and he was lucky—he was always lucky. He got invaluable experience with Porpora, and was presented to many personages in the gay world. He met Gluck, who a little later was quite inaccessible to the most pushful of young men; also Dittersdorf and Wagenseil, who, whatever we may think of them, were very high and unapproachable musicians in their time. He worked with unflagging diligence, and the natural instinct of his genius drove him to the works of Emanuel Bach, which he now possessed. He also bought theoretical books, prizing chiefly the *Gradus* of old Fux. So he mastered the groundwork of his art. Gluck advised him to go to Italy, but it is hard to imagine what he could have learnt there. He did not fail to profit by an introduction to one Karl (etc.) von Fuernberg, one of the old stamp of wealthy patrons of musicians. They loved to “discover” rising talent, did these ancient, obsolete types of amateurs of art. They were as proud of a brilliant protege as a modern literary critic is when he “discovers” a new minor poet. Von Fuernberg did his best for Haydn. He enabled him to write the first eighteen quartets; he helped him to get better terms for teaching—five florins a month instead of two. Through von Fuernberg or some one else he got to know the Countess Thun, who loved to play the friend to struggling genius. Finally, he was presented to Count Morzin, who, in 1759, appointed him as his composer and bandmaster. The band was small and the pay was small, but it placed Haydn in an assured position. He had a band to practise on, and he soon wrote his first symphony. Count Morzin’s home was at Lukavec. Here incessant concerts, vocal and instrumental, were given. Trios, quartets, symphonies, concertos, divertimentos—all kinds of compositions, and plenty of them, were required of Haydn, who must have had his hands everlastingly full.

He now evidently thought the days of his apprenticeship over, and proceeded at once to make a thorough fool of himself—as I have said, for the only time in his life. He was friendly with the family of a wig-maker named Keller, and gave lessons to his two daughters. He fell in love with the younger. That might have been well enough. But the girl elected to become a nun, and Haydn, either of his free and particularly asinine will, or through persuasion, married the elder, Anne Marie, on November 26, 1760. He was fully aware that his master, Count Morzin,



Page 9

would keep no married man in his employ, so that his act was doubly foolish. However, as it happened, that did not so much matter. Morzin had to rid himself of such an expensive encumbrance as an orchestra, and, marriage or no marriage, Haydn would have found himself without a post. He quickly got another position, so that one bad consequence of hasty marriage did not count. The other consequence remained—he still had a wife. She was, from all accounts, a demon of a wife. He had to separate from her, and long afterwards she wrote to him asking him to buy her a certain house which would suit her admirably as soon as he was good enough to leave her a happy widow. It is satisfactory to know that Haydn bought the house for himself, and lived in it, and that the lady died before him, though only eight years.

He had borne privation, hunger, cold, wet beds to sleep in, with the inveterate cheeriness that never left him. He worked on steadily until his old age in the service he now entered—that of Prince Anton Esterhazy. Until the year 1791, when he adventured far away for the first time to come to London, his outward life was as regular and uneventful as that of a steady Somerset House clerk. There is next to nothing to record, and I will spare the patient reader the usual stock of fabulous anecdotes, the product of hearsay and loose imaginations. Let us turn for a moment to what he had learnt and actually achieved during the first thirty years of his life.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY MUSIC

Save one quartet, I have heard none of the compositions of Haydn's first period. Their interest is mainly historical, and the public cannot be blamed for never evincing the slightest desire to hear them. Haydn had, indeed, a glimmering of the new idea—perhaps more than a glimmering; but, on the whole, he was still in leading strings, and dared not follow the gleam. It is not surprising. He was not one of Nature's giant eruptive forces, like Beethoven. His declared object always was to please his patrons; and consider who his patrons were. We may be sure that the "discords" of a Beethoven suddenly blared forth would have scared Count Morzin and all his pigtail court. Haydn was supposed to write the same kind of music as other musicians of the period were writing, and, if possible, to do it better; Count Morzin did not pay him to widen the horizons of an art. Consider his musical position also. He was born twenty-seven years before the death of Handel, eighteen before that of the greatest Bach; Bach was writing gigantic works in the contrapuntal style and forms; Handel had not composed the chain of oratorios on which his fame rests. It is conceivable that had Haydn been born in less humble circumstances, that had he easily reached a high position, he, too, might have commenced writing fugues, masses and oratorios on a big scale—and be utterly forgotten to-day. His good luck thrust him into a lowly post, and by developing the forms

in which he had to compose, and seeking out their possibilities, he became a great and original man.



Page 10

It is hard, of course, to say how much any given discoverer actually discovers for himself, and how much is due to his predecessors and contemporaries. The thing certain is that the great man, besides finding and inventing for himself, sums up the others. All the master-works have their ancestry, and owe something to contemporary works. The only piece of music I know for which it is claimed that it leaped to light suddenly perfect, like Minerva from Jupiter's skull, is "Sumer is icumen in," and almost as many authors have been found for it as there are historians. The bones of John of Fornsete (or another) have long since mouldered, and it need not disturb their dust to say that in all certainty there were many canons—hundreds, perhaps thousands—before "Sumer is icumen in" had the good fortune to be put in a safe place for posterity to stare and wonder at. This is platitudinous, but it needs to be borne in mind. And, bearing it in mind, we can see in Haydn's early attempts much in a style that had been used before or was being used at the time, much that is simply copied from the younger Bachs, from Domenico Scarlatti, Dittersdorf, Wagenseil, perhaps even his Parisian contemporary Gossec. But we see the character of the themes becoming more and more his own. There are no—or few—contrapuntal formulas, hardly any mere chord progressions broken into arpeggios and figured designs. By going to the native dances and folk-tunes of his childhood Haydn took one of the most momentous, decisive steps in his own history and in the history of music. That too much quoted opening of the first quartet (B-flat) really marks the opening of an era. It was not a subject to be worked out contrapuntally; it was not sufficiently striking harmonically to tempt Haydn, as themes of an allied sort had constantly tempted Emanuel Bach, to make music and gain effects by repeating it at intervals above or below. It is an arpeggio of the chord of B-flat; it leaps up merrily, and has a characteristic delightful little twist at the end, and in the leap and in the twist lay possibilities of a kind that he made full use of only in his maturer style. All composers up till then, if they ventured to use bits of popular melody at all, gave them the scholastic turn, either because they liked it, or because the habit was strong. The fact that Haydn gave it in its naive form, invented themes which in their deliberate naivete suggest folk-song and dance, hints at what his later music proves conclusively, that he found his inspiration as well as his raw material in folk-music.

The business of the creative artist is to turn chaos into cosmos. He has the welter of raw material around him; the shaping instinct crystallizes it into coherent forms. For that intellect is indispensable, and almost from the beginning Haydn's intellect was at work slowly building his folk-music into definite forms easily to be grasped. Gradually the second subject differentiates itself from the first while maintaining the flow of the tide of music; and gradually we get the "working-out" section, in which the unbroken flow is kept up by fragments of the two subjects being woven into perpetually new melodic outlines, leading up to the return of the first theme; and the second theme is repeated in the key of the first, with a few bars of coda to make a wind-up satisfactory to the ear.

Page 11

Here let us observe the value of key relationships. The first subject was given out in the key (say) of C. A momentary pause was made, and the second subject introduced in the dominant key G, and in this key the first section of a piece of music in symphony-form ends. That ending could not satisfy the ear, which demanded something more in the first key. Until recent times that desire was gratified with a repetition of the whole first section. The repetition of the first theme in the first key satisfied the ear for the moment, though at the end of the section the want was again felt. So when the end of the first section was again reached a modulation was made, gradually or suddenly, to another key; and in the course of this, the development or “working-out” section, many keys might be touched on, but without ever giving the ear the satisfaction of feeling itself at rest in the first key again. That was only done by the reintroduction of the first theme in the first key. The first theme is played and leads on to the pause, after which the second theme is given in the key of the first, so that after a few bars of coda, always in the same key, the movement terminates in a perfectly satisfactory manner. This is a crude description in which much is left out, but it will serve to enable the reader to understand how passages widely different in character are bound together into a coherent whole by the composer continuously leading the ear to expect something—that something being the original key-chord, and, while offering many things, only finally satisfying the ear’s craving when the movement is coming to a finish. If the second theme, let us say, were in the same key as the first, it would sound like the beginning of a new movement, and at once we should have the continuity broken. As a passage between two passages in the original key it sounds perfectly in its place, and, no matter how contrasted in character, is a kind of continuation of the first passage. At the same time it creates a strong desire, that must be restrained till the time comes, for what follows. We listen to the second theme and to the “working-out” section, knowing we are far from home, but perfectly aware that we shall get there, and that a certain feeling of suspense will be relieved. Thus the music is like a great arch that supports itself. The unity got in the fugue by continuous motion is got here by one key perpetually leading the ear to ask for another key. It seems simplicity itself; its underlying idea—that of making the ear always expect something, and gratifying it by bits, and only fully towards the close of the movement—is that by which unity is combined with variety in modern music, though we have long since got rid of the “legitimate” series of keys.



Page 12

The grouping of the movements need not detain us long. Many groupings had been tried; but it seems natural to open with an allegro—preceded or not preceded by a few bars of slow introduction—to follow this with a slow movement of some sort; then to insert or not to insert a movement of medium rapidity as a change from the bustle of the first and the quiet of the second; and finally to end with a merry dancing movement. This, again, is in the merest outline the plan adopted by Haydn. Whether he used three or four movements, the principle was the same—a quick beginning, a slow middle, and a quick ending; afterwards, each movement grew longer, but the way in which he lengthened them can better be treated later when we come to his bigger works.

From the first he used counterpoint, canon, imitation, and all the devices of the contrapuntal style. But the difference between his newer style and that of Wagenseil and the rest is that he neither uses counterpoint of any sort nor chord figures to make up the true substance of the music, but merely as devices to help him in maintaining a continuous flow of melody. That melody, as has already been said, might be in the top or bottom part, or one of the middle parts; but though it may, and, indeed, always did pause at times, as the melody of a song pauses at the end of each line, it is unbroken from beginning to end. The first part of a movement might be compared to the first line of a song: there is a pause, but we expect and get the second line; there is another pause, and we get a line which is analogous to the “working-out” section, and the last line, ending in the original key if not on the same note, corresponds to the final section of the movement, after which we expect nothing more, the ear being quite satisfied.

Werner, his musical chief in his next station, had the sense to see that this continuous melody was the thing aimed at, and because Haydn placed counterpoint in a subsidiary condition he called him a “charlatan.” Poor man, had his sense pierced a little deeper! For Haydn was—after Bach and Handel and Mozart—one of the finest masters of counterpoint who have lived. When the time came to write fugues he could write them with a certain degree of power. But his aim was not writing fugues any more than an architect’s aim is painting in water-colours. Water-colours are very useful to architects, and they make use of them; but because they do not rival Turner or David Cox it does not follow that they are not masters of the art of architecture. Haydn aimed at—or rather, at this epoch, groped after—a kind of music in which continuous melody expressive of genuine human feeling was the beginning and the end, and his mastery of counterpoint, harmony, and all technical devices were more than sufficient for the purpose.



Page 13

To my mind he wrote as well for the strings at this time as ever he did. He could play the violin himself, as the violin was then played, and all his life, even in quartets, he had to write for players who would be considered tenth-rate to-day. As for orchestration, that was an art neither he nor Mozart was to hit upon for some time. The wind instruments had one principal function, and that was to fill in the music, enrich it, and make it louder, and another minor one—occasionally to put in solos. In writing suitably for them, and, in fact, in every other part of writing music for courts, Haydn was now the equal, if not the superior, of every man living in 1761 (Gluck did not write for the courts), and he was getting a better and better grip of his new idea.

CHAPTER IV

1761-1790

Haydn went to Eisenstadt, in Hungary, in 1761 to take up the duties of his new post—that of second Kapellmeister to Prince Anton of Esterhazy. In that year feudal Europe had not been shaken to the foundations by the French Revolution; few in Europe, indeed, and none in sleeping German Austria, dreamed that such a shaking was at hand, and that royal and ducal and lesser aristocratic heads, before the century was out, would be dear at two a penny. Those drowsy old courts—how charming they seem on paper, how fascinating as depicted by Watteau! Yet one wonders how in such an atmosphere any new plants of art managed to shoot at all. The punctilious etiquette, the wigs, the powder, the patches, the grandiloquent speechifyings, the stately bows and graceful curtsies, the prevalence—nay, the domination—of taste, what a business it all was! The small electors, seigneurs, dukes and what not imitated the archducal courts; the archdukes mimicked the imperial courts: all was stiff, stilted, unnatural to a degree that seems to us nowadays positively soul-killing, devilish. But some surprising plants grew up, some wondrous fruits ripened in them. A peasant-mind, imbued with peasant-songs, was set in one; the peasant-mind in all outward matters conformed to all the rules, and was loved by the petty princes to whom it was never other than highly, utterly respectful, and lo! the peasant-songs blew and blossomed into gigantic art forms, useful to the composers who came in a time when feudalism was as clean swept away as the wigs and patches that were its insignia. To change this rather too eloquent trope, Haydn, living a life of deadly routine and dulness, duly subservient to his divinely appointed betters, took the songs of the people (who paid to keep the whole apparatus in working order), and out of them built up what is the basis of all the music written since. If Providence in very deed ordained that millions of men and women should toil that a few small electors, dukes and princes should lead lives of unhappy artificial luxury, then Providence did well at the same time to arrange for a few counts such as Morzin, and princes like those of Esterhazy.

Page 14

Haydn's chief in musical affairs was old Werner. His salary was at first L40, and he was passing rich on it; and it was soon raised to L79. We need trouble no further as to whether on such wages he was poor or rich: he evidently considered himself well-to-do. In fact, even in those days, when copyright practically did not exist, he continually made respectable sums by his compositions, and after he had been twice to England, ever the Hesperides' Garden of the German musician, he was a wealthy man, and was thankful for it. He was as keen at driving a bargain as Handel, or as the mighty Beethoven himself, and we, too, ought to be glad that he had a talent for getting money and keeping it.

The date of his appointment was May 1, 1761; but he had been at work less than a year when Prince Anton died, March 18, 1762. Anton was succeeded by his brother Nicolaus, surnamed or nicknamed the Magnificent, and in truth a most lordly creature. Almost immediately changes began. Eisenstadt did not content Nicolaus; Versailles was the admiration of all Europe, and he determined to rival Versailles. The building was begun at Suettoer, a place at the southern end of Neusiedler-See, of the palace of Esterhaz, and it was here that Haydn was destined to write the bulk of his music, though not that on which his fame depends to-day. Meanwhile, at Eisenstadt he was kept busy enough. It is true he was second to Werner, but Werner was both old and old-fashioned, and devoted himself entirely to the chapel services and music, leaving Haydn to look after the incessant concerts—each of them interminable, as was the fashion then—the cantatas, instrumental pieces, operas and operettas. Werner thought little of Haydn: he regarded him as an adventurer and musical frivol; but Haydn, as became the bigger man, esteemed Werner. There does not seem to have been any friction; Haydn was always shrewd enough to avoid friction, which means wasted energy, and the problem, if problem it was, of double mastership was solved by Werner's death on March 5, 1766. Henceforth Haydn was alone and supreme.

Haydn's magnificent patron and master played the baryton, and it was one of his duties to write pieces for it. Of these there remain many, mostly uninteresting. It was always his avowed aim to please his patron—that done he was satisfied; but in an evil hour he thought to please him better by learning to play the baryton—a singular bit of short-sightedness on Haydn's part. He quickly discovered his error: Prince Nicolaus liked the instrument best when played by princely hands in the princely manner. Haydn limited himself for the future to writing for it. With his band, we are told, he got on excellently, and what with rehearsing them and conducting them and composing, every hour of the day brought its task. The band consisted at the beginning of sixteen chosen players, but the number was increased afterwards. The only events in his life were the smaller or larger fetes

Page 15

for which he prepared the music. For instance, in 1763 Anton, the son of Nicolaus, was married, and Haydn composed a pastoral, *Acis and Galatea*, which was duly performed. Again, in 1764 Prince Nicolaus attended the coronation of the Archduke Joseph; his return was one of these events, and to celebrate it Haydn wrote a grand cantata. A Life of him at this period would be a list of his compositions, with a few notes about the occasions that prompted them. Such a list I am not minded to prepare. The publishers' catalogues exist, and as for the various fetes, one was very much like another; and those folk who do not find accounts of them insufferably tedious can find out about them in one of the larger biographies.

In 1767 the Prince, Haydn, band and all, took up their residence at the palace of Esterhaz. A few singers and players were left at Eisenstadt to keep up the chapel services, and doubtless had an easy time; the rest were worked almost to death. Esterhaz was a gorgeous, if solitary, residence. Built on a morass far from the busy world, it was the scene of constant hospitality and great functions. There were two theatres—one, as I understand the matter, entirely for marionette shows; the scenery was regarded at the time as excellent. Most of the operas were sung in Italian by Italian singers; even books of the words were printed. In short, the opera at the Palace of Esterhaz seems to have been in no respect very different from the fashionable opera of to-day. Singers were engaged for a year or a longer period; casual artists called, and were engaged for one performance or more, and having been rewarded according to their deserts, passed on their way. Great personages visited the Prince in state, and were regally entertained, Haydn everlastingly writing special music. Maria Theresa stayed for three days in 1773, and thus we get the Empress Theresa symphony in C, also two operas of sorts, *L'Infidelta Delusa* and *Philemon and Baucis*, specially composed for the occasion. What with retinues of servants bustling about, banquets, balls, hunting-parties, dramas, operas, concerts, the scene must have always been lively enough—there can have been nothing of stagnation. When the Prince went on visits he also travelled in state, and took his band and singers with him. When at home, we read, the artists spent their spare time at the cafe; but I cannot think that Haydn ever had much leisure.

It was not until 1769 that Prince, conductor, band, singers and all visited Vienna. Nothing remarkable occurred. To celebrate the great and joyful event Haydn wrote one opera, *La Spezziata*, which was given at the house of von Sommerau—then they went back to Esterhaz, and saw no more of Vienna for eight years. Of this eight years there is nothing to set down save a list of compositions. How the man, such a man—for in his quiet methodical way he loved pleasure—stood it at all, I don't know, but stand it he did.

Page 16

However, in 1776-1777 there was a little diversion. Haydn composed an opera, *La Vera Constanza*, for the Court theatre in Vienna, and intrigues for some rival composer—his name does not matter—began. A rival won the first round in the contest; his opera was produced. In disgust Haydn had his score taken away, and it was soon sung at Esterhaz. I suppose Haydn would have considered it a sin to waste good material. Moreover, it was given at a suburban theatre of Vienna, and it proved so far successful that Artaria, the publisher, thought it worth while to engrave half a dozen songs and a duet from it. The opera which beat his at the Court theatre is utterly forgotten; we know of the other because of the composer's name. Some years later, in 1784, he had another touch of the ways of men in the busy world, sent, perhaps, to reconcile him to his habitual seclusion. As far back as 1771 he had written his first oratorio—which I am not ashamed to say I have never looked at—*Il Ritorno di Tobia*. It was performed, apparently with eclat, by the Vienna Tonkuenstler Societaet, of which body Haydn wished to become a member. He put down his name, and paid his subscription, and was not a little surprised to learn that the condition on which alone he would be elected was that he should compose works for the society whenever he was asked. Now, those works would have become the society's property, if only because they alone would have the scores, and Haydn was a busy man, a man of European reputation, whose music was worth money, and a shrewd business man, who saw no fun in throwing money away. His annoyance may be conceived. He withdrew his subscription—it is a wonder they would let him have it—and would have nothing to do with the society until after his return from England in 1791, when the feud was ended, and he was triumphantly elected senior assessor—whatever that may be. What the society was thinking in the first instance I cannot guess, unless it was that a mere professional composer and Kapellmeister should pay double, or considerably more than double, for the honour of belonging to so distinguished a body of amateurs. Anyhow, in the long run Haydn was so well pleased with them that he seems to have made over to them *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, from which they derived profits that enabled them to keep their heads above water when darker days came. Long before this date, however, honours were being thrown at him. His opera, *L'Isolu Disabilite*, to Metastasio's words, was sung in concert form at Vienna in 1779, and the Accademia Filarmonica of Modena made him a member; Haydn sent the score to the King of Spain, who repaid the compliment with a gold snuff-box. In the same year he got a little relief from the unbroken routine of his duties, for the theatre at Esterhaz was burnt to the ground, and Prince Nicolaus, seeing no means of passing his evenings, took a trip to Paris. Whether, from Haydn's point of view, he did well or not is open to question;

Page 17

for a fiddler named Polzelli had come to Esterhaz, and Haydn could find nothing better to do than flirt with his wife Luigia. He did more than flirt—he went a trifle further, and the lady took full advantage of his infatuation. She everlastingly importuned him for money, and made him sign a promise to marry her if ever he should be free to do so. Finally, the trouble came to an end somehow; but in his will Haydn left the lady an allowance for life.

The new theatre was built, and reopened in 1780 with a representation of *La Fidelta Premiare*. This pleased every one so much that it was given once at a concert under Haydn's direction, that the Emperor Joseph might hear it, and it led to Artaria, who was a very great gun in the publishing line of business, taking him up in serious earnest. Life went on much as it had done before the fire, or, if it was not quite so monotonous, it was still dull enough. Honours came to him from abroad, and when in Vienna he made the acquaintance of many more or less celebrated men. Michael Kelly is well worth reading on the subject, for Michael was no fool, and very much more than an ordinary celebrity-hunter. Haydn's friendship with Mozart is the most interesting feature of this period, and a very beautiful incident in the lives of two men of genius. Mozart, said Haydn, was the greatest composer then living; Mozart regarded Haydn as a father, and dedicated some quartets to him in phrases revealing the deepest affection. The intimacy ended when Haydn left, towards the end of 1790, on his first trip to England; in 1791 Mozart perished miserably, and was laid in a pauper's grave—the man whom Haydn called the greatest composer of the time was buried by the parish, and in 1792 Haydn returned triumphantly from England, his brow wreathed with laurel, figuratively, and his pockets crammed with English notes and gold, literally. There are a few other odds and ends worth mentioning. His opera, *Orlando Paladino*, written in 1782, made a great hit, and under its German name of *Ritter Roland* was the last of his stage works to ride off the stage. In 1781 the Grand Duke Paul and his wife had heard some of his quartets, and the Duchess was so pleased with them that she took lessons from the composer, and made him a present. London, too, had heard of him, and was thinking of him; and William Forster, the publisher, made arrangements with him which resulted in the publication in England of eighty-two symphonies and twenty-four quartets, not to mention other works. In 1785 he produced one of the most beautiful of his works, *The Seven Words*. This, I must own, I have never heard in its original form. It was commissioned by some priests of a church at Cadiz: seven slow movements to be played between meditations to be spoken on the words of Christ on the Cross. In this shape it became well known, and, later, Haydn himself conducted it in London as a *Passione Instrumentale*. The theme inspired him, and it was a further inspiration

Page 18

to add words and arrange the music for chorus. Nothing he had composed up to this, whether for church or theatre or concert, matched it for a strange blend of the pathetic and the sublime. Had he died in 1790 his name might have lived by this work alone. In a style as different from Bach's and Handel's as their styles were different from Palestrina's and Byrde's, he proved himself one of the mighty brotherhood who knew how to write sacred music. It was first given with the words at Eisenstadt in 1797, and it is noteworthy that the last time he directed his own music in public, in 1807, it was *The Seven Words*, and not *The Creation* nor *The Seasons*, that was rendered.

This long chapter of Haydn's life, so uneventful outwardly, was now about to close. Negotiations had been opened before by Cramer with a view of inducing him to come to London, but nothing came of them. In 1787 Salomon, an enterprising fiddler, got Bland, a music publisher, to try what could be done. Bland was unsuccessful, but he got a quartet from Haydn in this wise. Contrary to his custom of receiving no one until he was completely dressed, wig and all, in the ceremonious eighteenth-century fashion, Haydn was trying to shave when Bland was shown in. He was also, it would seem, using the Rohrau equivalent for very bad language, for the razor was taking away his serenity of mind and bits of his skin. "I would give my last quartet for a decent razor!" he exclaimed wrathfully. Bland ran out and brought back a razor, and it seemed to be a good one, for history, which never lies, says he got the quartet. In 1790 Salomon made another attempt, this time in person, and was repulsed. He had got as far as Cologne on his way back to England, when he heard news that sent him flying again to Vienna as fast as wheels and horses' legs could carry him.

The Esterhazy chapter of Haydn's life had closed with something of a snap. On September 28 Prince Nicolaus died. He had started by being Haydn's patron and master, but long before the end he had become his friend. Haydn never dreamed of leaving, never even of going to England on a short visit, without his permission and full approval. He was put in his grave, and his magnificence would be all unremembered to-day but for his connexion with a great composer. Haydn had been in the service of him and his predecessor, Prince Anton, just on thirty years. Haydn himself was now close on sixty years old. He might have retired now, as a good Kapellmeister should, and lived in obscure comfort for the rest of his days. The next Prince, another Anton, dismissed the band and singers, but to the annuity of 1,000 florins which Nicolaus had left Haydn he added 400 florins.

Page 19

The story of these thirty years is soon told. What a fantastic mode of life it seems, how farcical, grotesque, in its dull routine, for a genius who was at work steadily building up new art-forms. Haydn, we are told, rose every morning at six, carefully shaved and dressed, drank a cup of black coffee, and worked till noon. Then he ate, and in the afternoon he worked again, and ate and worked until it was time to go to bed. He was a little man, very dark of skin, and deeply pock-marked, and he had a large and ugly nose. His lower jaw and under lip projected, and he had very kindly eyes. He was far from being vain about his personal appearance, but he took an immense amount of pains with it, for all that. Ladies ran much after him, too. But he cannot have spared them much of his time. All who knew him were agreed about his methodical habits, and we have only to look at a catalogue of his achievements, and to consider that on every day of the week he had both rehearsals and concerts, to realize that his entire time must have been eaten up by the writing of music and the preparation and direction of musical performances. Undoubtedly he wearied of it at times, though he said that on the whole it had been good for him, and that by being so much thrown upon his own resources he had been forced to become original. As to this, I beg leave to be sceptical; and at any rate his finest work was done when he was free of his bondage, and actively engaged in the busy world. There is a note of regret for the irremediable in that remark of his. It is as if he had said: "True, it was dull, insufferably tedious, but, after all, it had its compensations." How his band and singers tolerated the life I cannot tell. They lived together in a sort of family, but their cafe meetings at Esterhaz were a poor substitute for the distractions of the capital. One might assume that they took their holidays in turns—for many had wives and children whom they were obliged to leave behind—but a well-authenticated story destroys that fond belief. It is the story of the Farewell Symphony. The artists, wearying of so long a sojourn so far away from home, asked Haydn to intercede for them with the Prince. Haydn and his folk were always on the very best of terms, and he did intercede for them, in his own canny way. He composed a symphony in which, towards the end, player after player finishes his part, blows out his candle, packs up his instrument, and leaves the room, until at last one solitary violin is left industriously playing on. The Prince took the hint. "Since they are all gone," he remarked, "we might as well go too." And he gave orders for the return to Vienna, which he detested.



Page 20

The eighteenth century lies behind us like a fruitful land, with the touch of the old-world distinction on it, the old-world aroma clinging to it. On paper, on canvas, on wooden panels, it is very picturesque in its queer stately way, if very artificial. The sunlight seems always to bask on it. It reminds one of a perpetual summer Sunday afternoon in a small provincial town. But its voice speaks in its music, often bitterly sad and sweetly regretful, and there is little hint of sunshine or careless merrymaking there. Bach is steeped in cloister gloom, with frequent moments of religious ecstasy. Haydn is generally cheerful in a humdrum sort of way, but when his real feelings begin to speak, not even Mozart is sadder. They were human beings with greedy, desiring souls in them, these men and women of the dead eighteenth century, not delicate painted figures on screens and panels, and none but actors would be consoled by their undoubted picturesqueness when they are being tortured or ennuied. They saw their youth slipping away uneventfully, and dark old age coming steadily upon them. The gay bustle and hurry-scurry of arriving and departing parties, the great dames and languid gentlemen lounging on the terraces, the feasts and dignified dances—these are very pleasant for us to look back on, but what did they seem to the human beings, the players, actors and singers, who watched the show go on? The great ones were in their element: at Esterhaz or elsewhere *their* world and mode of life were the same—but the poor artists?... The single cafe was a poor compensation for a rollicking life of change. The exile from Paris—the *avocat*, or *notaire*, or *docteur* in the provinces—how he hankers after the electrically lit boulevards, and wonders whether he dare run up for a day or two, and what will happen, there and here, if he does. And Haydn—we can fancy him, after brilliant evenings at Esterhaz standing, looking Viennawards on still nights, the starry immensity above him and the quiet black woods and waters around him—the gay lights of Vienna must have danced before his inner vision, and his soul must have risen in revolt, full of angry desire to be once again in the midst of the happy chattering tide of life in the great town. No other great composer could have stuck to his task as he did. Mozart would have forgotten his duties; Beethoven would purposely have neglected them. But Haydn's Prince willed the thing to be done, and Haydn acquiesced. The patient blood of generations of industrious, persevering, plodding peasant labourers was in him; and perhaps his early training under Frankh and Reutter counted for something. He went on unflinchingly, outwardly calm—calm even in the eyes of languid eighteenth-century people—inwardly living strenuously as he battled with and conquered his art-problems.

CHAPTER V

MUSIC OF THE MIDDLE PERIOD

Page 21

This must have occurred to every one whilst reading the biographies of great artists: After all, is it the function of high genius to discover means of expression only that they may be used afterwards by numberless mediocrities who have nothing whatever to express? It is gravely set down about Haydn, for instance, that he “stereotyped” the symphony form, and “handed it on” to future generations. Now, I have observed that the men who do this kind of work are always the second-rate men: first come the inventors, the pioneers, and then the perfecters; it is always at the close of a school that the tip-top men arise. They claw in their material from everywhere around, and use it up so thoroughly as to leave nothing for the later comers to do with it that was not done before, and done better, done when the stuff was fresh and the impulse full of its first vigour. Haydn did a lot of spade-work for Mozart and Beethoven, especially Mozart; but that was early, more than twenty years before his death, and it is significant that the portion of his life-work which most influenced and directed Mozart and Beethoven is chiefly second-rate music. When he was writing the music that forces us to place him near the noblest composers, he obeyed the invariable rule, and was in turn being influenced by Mozart. The case is remarkable, but it is only what anyone with a seeing eye might have predicted, and to us to-day it is quite plain.

It is the constructive part of his work—the work of his middle period—we must now briefly examine. In the list of his principal compositions for the period 1761-1790 are included nearly one hundred symphonies and other orchestral works, innumerable trios, quartets, operas, songs, and clavier or piano pieces, one oratorio, *The Seven Words*, and other sacred pieces. How many of them are heard to-day? How many could be heard with pleasure? Very, very few. If anyone who happened to be familiar with the Salomon symphonies—belonging to his last period, after he had known Mozart—and *The Creation* heard some of this older stuff for the first time, he would hardly believe that the man who in his age wrote so much fresh, vital music, charged with colour and energy, could in the prime of physical life have written music that is now so old-fashioned and stale. To this general verdict exceptions must be made in the cases of some of the quartets, the clavier pieces, and *The Seven Words*, the last especially being, as I have already said, in his most splendid manner. Haydn did not stereotype the symphony, because it never was at any time stereotyped; but he made endless experiments in the search for a general profound principle which underlies all music composed since his time. Mozart helped to make his own meaning clear to him, divined what he was groping after, and himself seized it and made glorious use of it, and Haydn profited, so that we have his master-works. But the experiments possess for us little more than the interest of experiments. Yet they were new and inspiring at the time. Had he continued to write in the pre-1761 manner, he would never have by 1790 won his world-wide fame, and made London seek him and so draw from him his finest work.



Page 22

After, say, 1785, the old contrapuntal smack has gone out of his writing, and his form has grown definite. Often, indeed, his outlines are much too hard, as was natural at a time when he was with all his might trying to take his principles in a firm grip. If we take a typical symphony of this time, we find, first the adagio introduction. This feature, as we all know, was turned to noble use by Beethoven, notably in the seventh symphony; but it is not an essential. Mozart scarcely used it, and even with Haydn I fancy the Prince must have liked it, or we should not find it so often. The allegro is in what the text-books call the “accepted” form, first and second subjects—often not clearly differentiated, but more and more so as time passed—“working-out” section and recapitulation with or without coda. Here we have complete unity, and as much variety as the composer wanted. With all the richness and variety, the intellectual structure is so firm and distinctly marked that the mind grasps the whole thing at once. Then comes the slow movement, sometimes with two distinct themes, sometimes with only one, varied at each repetition, and with episodes composed of fresh matter between the repetitions. The minuet and trio are little, if at all, different from those of Emanuel Bach. The finale is generally a bit of a romp; the structural plan is that of the first movement, or a rondo. So much for the form. As for the music, it is, I say, free from counterpoint, and is more and more filled with the spirit of folk-song. The themes sing and the music takes its impulse and motion from them; the web is no longer made up of contrapuntal workings: counterpoint is never more than an accompaniment, a helpful device. What Wagner called the melos, the melody, or melodic outline, that begins at the beginning and ends only at the end—this is the thing. The influence of the folk-song is certainly most marked in the slow movements, just as that of the dance is shown in the finales. Haydn’s adagios, at his best, speak with the deepest yet the simplest feeling. A fairly close analogy is that of Burns, who, with little natural inspiration, found inspiration in his native ballads, and often worked up the merest doggerel into artistic shapes of wondrous poignancy. Haydn’s habitual temper was cheerful, and his music rattles along with a certain gaiety of gallop very far away from the mechanical grinding or pounding accents of the contrapuntalists. (I don’t mean the great men; I mean the Wagenseils, Gossecs and the rest, who were trying to do the new thing without shaking off the old contrapuntal fetters.) But the spirit of his native songs was continually touching him and informed his melodies with a degree of emotion that we find in none of the other strivers after symphonic form.

Page 23

We are far removed from Haydn now, and if often his second subjects seem little different from his first, we must remember that when all was fresh contrasts would be perceived that now have vanished out of the music. Haydn, neither now nor in his final period, was excessively fond of violent contrasts. Often the new start in the new key seems to have afforded a sufficient feeling of variety, and it is worthy of note that later, when Beethoven used violently contrasting kinds of themes to express dramatically contrasting feelings, the question of key ceased to have the same importance. Composers later than Mozart have never troubled to mark their first key, so that the key of the second subject might sound like a grateful change and continuation; the stuff of the themes has been depended on for variety, while for unity the great art of thematic development has served. So far as Haydn carried this art, we may note a few of his devices. Double counterpoint, imitation, fugue, or at least fughetta—these he returned to later. Bits of themes—mere fragments marking definite rhythms—were used in spinning new melodies, a rhythm, or perhaps a sufficiently distinctive harmonic progression, connecting them with what had gone before. This use of a “germ” idea was chiefly due to Beethoven, who, as in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, worked out a gigantic piece of music from four notes. But Haydn knew well how the value of intervals in a melody might be changed by the harmony, how a familiar bit of tune, with the simplest harmonies arranged in a new way, resulted in practically a new melody. This device he commonly used, sometimes with fine results. The incessant series of climaxes, leading us on and keeping us in suspense until a certain point is reached, then releasing the tension for a moment, and preparing to do the same again—these he employed to an extent, but not as Beethoven employed them.

All this Mozart perceived, and made instant use of. As for the mediocrities for whose benefit Haydn is held to have “stereotyped” the form, what could they learn from him? I will say what they did learn. They learnt to take themes which did not sound exactly like the subjects of a fugue; they laid out their first and their second, and then they did not know what on earth to do, and footled and stumbled till it was time for the recapitulation; so that Haydn himself said the worst of the young men was that they could not stick long enough at anything to work it out, and no sooner began one thing than they wanted to be off to another. They were even worse off in their slow movements. Unlike Mozart, they never discovered that the continuous melody, the melos, was Haydn’s grand secret; and if they had discovered it, they had not the genius and the simple deep sincerity to make use of the discovery. That natural sincerity of feeling kept Haydn on the right path through all the weary Esterhazy years, when he was surrounded by French influences and every influence that made for artificiality and falsity.



Page 24

The clavier music, with the exception of a few bits, is of no great importance; still, I have played much of it with pleasure in Dr. Riemann's edition, and found many charming things. His genius, however, so far as anything less in scale than the symphony was concerned, was all for the string quartet. Some of his slow movements, in their sudden moments of unsuspected depths of feeling, prophesy of the coming of the great human Beethoven rather than the ethereal, divinely beautiful Mozart. Suavity, smoothness, piquancy, perfect balance between section and section, and each movement and the other movements—these characterize all the later quartets. They were intended for chamber use only—to play them in a large hall is criminal—and it almost goes without saying that, after the hot stuff of Beethoven and even Schubert, more than a couple of them in an evening palls on one's palate. Haydn was in many ways a great, a very great, composer; but no one can live with his work as one can live with Bach or Beethoven. We are all of the nineteenth or twentieth century; Haydn was of the eighteenth. Such contradictions of godlike greatness and mere simple childishness were surely never met together in one man, and we can worship the greatness without any compulsion to tolerate the childishness.

For the operas a few words will suffice. In style they are far more old-fashioned than Mozart's or Gluck's, and he had the dramatic—or, rather, theatrical—instinct much less strongly developed than either of these. He wrote strings of songs, duets, *etc.*, for the theatre at Esterhaz—many of them for the Marionette Theatre—and was content if they pleased his patron. One or two were given elsewhere with some success; but, with regard to *Armide*, he wrote stating his view that his operatic works should not be given at all save in the conditions for which they were composed. Those conditions have now for ever passed away, and excepting as curiosities the operas will never be heard again.

CHAPTER VI

1790-1795

All his magnificence over, Prince Nicolaus was left to sleep tranquilly in his tomb regardless of the mocking funereal magnificence around him; Prince Anton succeeded him, and dismissed the band, and pensioned Haydn; and Haydn, at the age of fifty-eight, was free. Salomon's horses must have been made to sweat on that rush back from Cologne to Vienna, and he was rewarded for his own enterprise and their toils. He captured Haydn easily. Haydn, in fact, having done his day's work manfully, seemed determined to have a jolly fling in the evening of his life, and, we may note, he determined to have it at a profit. In the event his little fling turned out to be, so far as externals went, quite the most exhilarating part of his life; until now all might seem to have been mere prelude and preparation. At Eisenstadt, Esterhaz and Vienna he had received compliments and



Page 25

presents, and had been regarded as more or less of a great little man. But in those days he had also been a servant, compelled when on duty to wear a uniform—he never wore it at other times, which shows how much he liked it—and to be for ever at the beck and call of his princely master. Now Jack—or, rather, Joseph—was to be his own master and the master of others, and to have half an aristocracy at his beck and call; he was to conquer the heart of yet another woman in addition to an already long list, the “pretty widow”—but I will not anticipate the story. He had no longer to write mainly for the ears of a Prince Nicolaus, but for those of a backward musical public accustomed to a very different sort of music, Handel’s. One is tempted to speculate as to what might have happened had he been sooner set free. There is nothing whatever to show that Nicolaus was ever in a hurry to urge him on to fresh experiments, and in the absence of any evidence it is merely fair to assume that such a prince in such a court, if he was not, indeed, everlastingly crying out for “something more like you used to give us,” was at any rate well enough content with the older stuff, and that in his tastes he lumbered far behind in Haydn’s daring steps. In London Haydn had now every opportunity, even every incentive, to strive, regardless of consequences, after his own ideal; and what the fruits were we shall see.

Terms were arranged; Haydn was to compose six symphonies and to “conduct” (at the pianoforte) six concerts. For this he was to receive a certain sum, and the proceeds of a benefit concert. A farewell was said to Prince Anton and many friends, and what proved to be a long, long farewell to Mozart, and on December 15, 1790, he and Salomon set out. They travelled to Munich first, then on through Bonn and Brussels to Calais; they crossed the Channel in safety, and arrived in London on the first day of the year 1791. There he first of all stayed with Bland (who had supplied the razor and bagged the quartet four years before) at 45, High Holborn. Then he went to live with Salomon at 18, Great Pulteney Street. Later on, he went to live in the country, at Lisson Grove, which is now not even a suburb, and he also paid visits to various country seats.

He was now nearly sixty; his mental powers were at their fullest vigour, his physical health was excellent, and he was on a holiday. Because it is about Haydn, the story of this and his subsequent visit to England makes delightful reading. If in his long solitude he had drawn all he could out of himself, now he was to receive impressions and impulses from the active and social world that had great results. He was lionized and petted, and enabled easily to make plenty of money; and he remained the simple, shrewd, unspoiled, industrious Haydn he had been all along. He met all the distinguished people of the time, and was taken to see and hear everything. Of course, Dr. Burney was much about. The whole

Page 26

visit has been written about a hundred times. I must touch quickly on the significant incidents. On March 11 the first of Salomon's concerts was given in the Hanover Rooms, and the audience was large, fashionable and enthusiastic. The band, with Salomon, first violin, leading, was constituted thus: sixteen violins, four violas, eight 'cellos, four basses, flutes, oboes, bassoons, trumpets, and drums—forty-one all told. It was this orchestra Haydn wrote his twelve best symphonies for. He himself directed at the pianoforte, and contemporaries were not wanting to say that at times the effect was somewhat disagreeable. The first "Salomon set" of symphonies were those in C, D, G (*The Surprise* or *Paukenschlag*), the B flat, C minor, and D. All these save the first are dated 1791.

The press, such as it was—one wonders who wrote the critiques of those days—was as enthusiastic as the audiences, so every one was pleased. One of his principal admirers was the "pretty widow." The incident was charmingly related by the late Mrs. Craigie in "The Artist's Life" (Werner Laurie). The lady was a Mrs. Schroeter, a wealthy widow, who lived in James Street, Buckingham Gate. Haydn gave her lessons, and appears to have visited her every day; the pair corresponded, and on his second trip to England he took lodgings in Bury Street, apparently to be near her. She was turned sixty, but Haydn described her in after-years as strikingly handsome. Whether she was or not, she evidently conquered his hot Hungarian heart, for he said that had he been free he certainly would have married her. What happened before his final return to Vienna is not known; afterwards there seem to have been no more letters, and only a chance remark shows that he preserved a tender memory of her. Thank goodness, they could not marry, so the romance is unspotted.

But Haydn had plenty of matters beside love-making to attend to. One Gallini got a licence to give entertainments in the King's theatre, and Haydn was engaged to compose, and did compose, for them. He had also been paid for an opera, *Orfeo*, and tried to finish it at Lisson Grove, but nothing ever came of it as the enterprise collapsed. His first benefit concert brought him L350; at the second, given on May 30, in the Hanover Square Rooms, he gave the *Seven Words* in its original form as a "Passione Instrumentale." Then he turned to a little holiday-making. He had multitudes of friends—almost chief amongst them being Cramer the younger—and multitudes of invitations. In July he went to Oxford, and was given an honorary degree; he directed three orchestral concerts there—imagine it!—from the organ. One of the symphonies played there became known as *The Oxford*, though it had been written long before. Prince Anton had invited him to return, but as Haydn had entered into a second contract with Salomon he contrived somehow to prolong his stay in England. The Prince of



Page 27

Wales had just got married, and invited Haydn to stay with him a few days—presumably to cheer him during the honeymoon. So they made music together; Haydn even obliged his hostess by singing with a voice which is said to have been like a crow's. Hoppner painted the portrait which is now in Hampton Court; it was engraved by Facius in 1807. Later, Haydn went to Cambridge; then came his second series of triumphs.

Even people who were supposed to be highly civilized showed at that epoch a considerable degree of their ancestors' love of fighting, both in London and in continental cities. Duels at the organ or piano, or on the violin, were commonly arranged between rival virtuosi, and art-matters were settled by votes, or by the stronger lungs or arms. Haydn was not to be left in peace. The professional musicians gave some concerts in opposition to Salomon's, and they imported Haydn's own pupil, Pleyel, as their champion. But Pleyel, though noted in his day as a teacher of the violin, and still remembered as the author of elementary violin duets useful to beginners, was a gentle, kindly soul, perfectly aware of Haydn's strength and his own weakness. Fight there was none, for Haydn simply paid no attention: but it is good to know that the two men remained friends. I do not remember that after this another attempt was made to turn the concert-hall into a cockpit.

During this second season many of Haydn's works of all descriptions were produced, and the concerts were as successful as those of the preceding year. An event, which might have been far-reaching in its effects had it happened earlier in his life, was his attendance at the Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey. He must have known some of Handel's oratorios, for Mozart had rescored them for van Swieten's concerts in Vienna; now he heard for the first time how the giant could indeed smite like a thunderbolt when he chose. However, during his next stay in London he had fuller opportunities of listening to Handel, and we will leave the matter until a few pages later. He attended about this time a service of charity children in St. Paul's Cathedral, and was strangely moved by a ridiculous old chant of Peter Jones, the effect being due, of course, to the fresh children's voices. He remarked on it in his diary, and wise commentators have pointed out that in writing the chant down he "beautified" it with passing notes. Of course, all organists of the period—and until a considerably later period—"beautified" everything they played in precisely the same fashion, and naturally the children would follow the organ. There remain to mention now only his friendship with Bartolozzi the engraver, and Mrs. Hodges, "the loveliest woman I ever saw" (ah! that inflammable heart), and the friendship with John Hunter, the surgeon, and his wife. Mrs. Hunter wrote the words for most of the twelve English canzonets. Mrs. Hodges composed, and some pieces by her, copied in Haydn's hand, with a note by him, were found amongst his papers.



Page 28

He was now a wealthy man. He returned to Vienna by way of Bonn, where Beethoven submitted a composition to him. As every one knows, Beethoven soon followed him to Vienna, and took lessons, and complained that Haydn took no pains with him. Now, Haydn was no pedant; with him the final court of appeal was the ear. When the theorists said that the celebrated false relations at the opening of Mozart's C major quartet were wrong, Haydn was merely impatient; he said that if Mozart wrote them we might depend upon it Mozart had an excellent reason for doing so. Probably he did not want Beethoven to waste his time on piffling schoolboy exercises. Anyhow, Beethoven always spoke of him with respect, and Haydn said Beethoven's septet was sublime.

His stay in Vienna was not a long one. He again agreed with Salomon to compose six new symphonies, and come to London to conduct them. On January 17, 1794, he set out. Prince Anton was unwilling for him to leave, and died three days afterwards. In many respects this visit was a duplicate of the first. The symphonies he wrote were the "Military" in G, and the D minor, both 1794; the E flat, apparently composed in 1793, and the B flat, E flat, and D minor and major, all 1795. The last, one of his finest, with certainly his finest introductory adagio, is probably the last symphony he wrote. It is not only dated 1795, but has the composer's note that it is the twelfth he wrote in England. As we shall see, he directed his attention to another style of music on his return to Vienna. Meantime, in London he was incessantly occupied, was honoured by royalty and them that were great in the land, he amassed money, and he saw much of his beloved Mrs. Schroeter. The King and Queen asked him to spend the summer at Windsor, and to settle in England. Haydn's reply was that he could not leave his prince. Prince Anton was dead, but a new Nicolaus reigned in his stead, and Haydn obviously regarded himself as a kind of family servant whose services pass to the next heir. It was during this visit that he heard so much of Handel. We must remember that at this time Handel was the musical god of England. George III. could barely stand any other music, and the public were almost, though not quite, of their royal master's way of thinking. Haydn they admired vastly; but it was found advisable to mix up a good deal of Handel's music with his on the programmes of the concerts at the King's theatre. There were also Handel performances at Covent Garden. Such effects as that of the throbbing mass of vocal tone in the chorus from *Joshua*, "The people shall tremble," must have overwhelmed him, and the swift directness and colossal climaxes of the "Hallelujah" from the *Messiah* certainly impressed him. However great the revelation of Handel's supreme might, Haydn never imitated Handel's style or devices for getting huge effects; the artistic treatment he received in London, as well as the social treatment, the flattery and petting,

Page 29

left him Haydn. That he learned much from Handel cannot be doubted, and it must have been Handel's music that suggested to him the idea of composing *The Creation* and so much church music; but Haydn the artist remained unchanged, like Haydn the man; he learnt and he profited, but he went on doing things in his own way. Handel was one of the three most potent influences who made him. The first was Emanuel Bach, who fertilized his mind, sowed ideas; the second was Mozart, who shaped, coloured and directed his thoughts; the last, Handel, turned his attention to oratorio, sacred music and choral writing. Handel modified Haydn less than the others; Haydn was then getting on towards old age; he was also by force of sheer instinct above all things a writer for the orchestra; and Handel's art, derived in the first place from Purcell's, had become a purely personal one which no one since has copied with the slightest success. Still it must have been good for Haydn to hear such a rolling river of tone as the "Amen" of *The Messiah*, the springtide joyfulness and jubilation of "And the glory of the Lord," the white heat of "And He shall purify," and "For unto us a Child is born," with its recurring climaxes of ever-increasing intensity. He frankly imitated none of these things, but they must, consciously or unconsciously, have heightened the nobility of the great choral fugues that relieve the triviality of so much of his church music.

After what we should call the concert season was over, Haydn again went off on a round of visits. Amongst others, there was one to Bath with Dr. Burney. When music in London came to life again, both Haydn and Salomon were much in evidence, but the Salomon concerts were now given under a more grandiloquent title, following the fashion of the time. They became the National School of Music, and were given in the King's concert-room which had recently been added to the King's theatre. Haydn was, as before, composer and conductor, and one or two of his symphonies figured in every programme. His last benefit brought him L400. It took place on May 4, and on June 1 he appeared before an English audience for the last time. Prince Nicolaus had sent urgently for him, as he desired to have his household and chapel music set in order. Haydn, of course, had never left the Esterhazy service. He continued to draw the emoluments of office, and thought it his duty to obey his Prince's wishes. He never again drudged as he had done in the old days, but he was always within call of his master. But those were leisurely days, and it took Haydn two and a half months to wind up his various affairs and say good-bye to his friends. On August 15 he set off. He must have carried away pleasant recollections. He had come to England with Salomon the first time, at the end of 1790, to have a fling, and by the time the second trip was over he must have felt that he had had one. It was assuredly a fling such as few composers have had after a long, industrious and



Page 30

honourable life's work. Not that his career was by any means finished. He had nearly fourteen years of life before him, many of them active years. He had made a fortune—"It is only in England," said he, "that such sums can be earned by artists"; and now, when he returned to his native land, he found his countrymen ready to treat him with all the respect, not to say reverence and hero-worship, he had received in England.

One delightful little incident must be related before closing this chapter, partly because of the prettiness of it, partly to show the position he had now won in Austria. Soon after his return to Vienna, a Count Herrach and some other friends took him to Rohrau, and showed him there, on the banks of the Leitha, a monument with a bust of him. They visited his birthplace, and Haydn went down on his knees and kissed the threshold. Then he showed his companions the stove where, as a baby, he had sat and pretended to play the violin. "There," he said, "is where my musical career began." He had had many triumphs, and more were to come, but none can have been more pleasant to him than this.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT SYMPHONIES

Till Haydn came to London, he had nearly always been compelled to compose for small bands. Count Morzin's, in fact, could scarcely be called a band. It consisted of a few strings, with a few wind instruments to increase the volume of the tuttis. The contrast of loud with soft passages was the most frequently used way of getting change and variety; though often solos were given to one instrument or another. Of orchestral colour, of orchestration in the modern sense, there was little. Haydn himself confessed in his old age that only then, when he had to leave the world, had he learnt how to use the wind instruments. But if Mozart's delightful tone-colouring cannot be found in the London symphonies, there is at any rate much greater fullness and richness than we find in the earlier ones. Yet here, again, Mozart was ahead of him, and one reason for this was the very different natures and textures of the two men's music. Haydn spoke naturally through the string quartet, and many of the slow movements of his symphonies, beautiful and profoundly moving though they are, are quartet movements, only requiring a larger number of instruments because greater fullness and force were needed to make the music satisfying in a large hall. Mozart's music was entirely different in texture. One cannot imagine the slow movement of the G Minor Symphony without wood wind. Haydn knew what his music was, and what orchestration it wanted, and he never dreamed of over-orchestrating. What he would have said of such music as that of Berlioz, where the orchestration is ridiculously out of proportion to the phrases, where the orchestra makes all the effect, if any at all is made, I cannot guess. He used extra instruments when he needed them, as, for example, in the "Military"



symphony. The touch of instrumentation in the andante of the “Surprise” is another instance. The idea of scaring sleepy old ladies with a sudden bang on the drums—the kettle-drum bolt—is often mentioned as an example of Haydn’s “humour.”



Page 31

When we compare the London symphonies to the earlier ones, we feel at once a stronger, more vehement spirit driving the music on. They seem richer in themes than the others, partly because the themes are bigger, partly because they are more perfectly adapted to monodic, harmonic treatment, and out of every bar something is made. A theme is pregnant, of course, according to what a composer sees in it and gets out of it. Who would know this of old Clementi—

[Illustration: some bars of music]

—if Mozart had not woven the *Zauberfloete* overture out of it? And who save Beethoven saw the possibilities of this?—

[Illustration: some bars of music]

But Haydn had to find such themes and see their possibilities before Mozart or Beethoven, and it was only after Mozart's death he was completely successful. He still largely depended upon fanfares and key-relationships in leading from passage to passage, and getting variety while keeping unity. There is still, compared with Beethoven, a huge amount of formalistic padding; but so far as he dared and could, he was loading his rifts with ore. Such a subject as this—

[Illustration: some bars of music]

—is far removed from his earlier folk-song themes, but it is further still from the old fugal type of subject. It is suited to symphonic development, and to no other kind.

The theme quoted in my first chapter is one of a singing kind, and, as if Haydn had planned the whole symphony with a prophetic glance at these remarks, the subject of the last movement is either a peasant-dance or a good imitation:

[Illustration: some bars of music]

This movement is rich in invention, even for Haydn at his best; it is full of jollity far removed from vulgarity; the atmosphere is continuously fresh, almost fragrant, and there are endless touches of poetic seriousness. The Adagio is as profound as anything he wrote. Perhaps, on the whole—and it may be wrong to indicate a choice at all—the slow movement of the symphony in C is fullest of sustained loveliness. That phrase beginning

[Illustration: some bars of music]

is, in its sheer beauty, reminiscent of Mozart, though the way the balance of feeling is recovered at the end is pure Haydn; there is the deepest human feeling, but perfect sanity is never lost. Towards the end the development is carried on in quite the Beethoven way, quite a long passage growing out of the simple phrase:



[Illustration: some bars of music]

Nearly all Haydn's art, and a good deal of the art of Beethoven, may be found in the B flat symphony. The theme is announced in a minor form, adagio:

[Illustration: some bars of music]

—taken up at once in the major, allegro, and wrought into most beautiful and expressive strains, each one growing out of the last (if I may once again use Wordsworth's magnificent word) "inevitably"; it could not be different.



Page 32

This is a very paltry discussion of a great matter, but no more space can be given to it here. In spite of all that has been written since Haydn drew the final double-bar of the D symphony, all the twelve are yet worth days and nights of study. All that Haydn is not may be freely granted; but when we learn to know the London symphonies we learn to realize in some degree what a mighty inventive artist and workman he was.

CHAPTER VIII

1795-1809

During his stay in London, Haydn's good wife had asked him to buy her that house in the suburbs of Vienna which would come in so conveniently when he left her a widow. The request was not entirely wasted—that is, he bought the house, made some additions, and from 1797 lived in it himself. Here he composed *The Creation*, *The Seasons*, and the bulk of his church music; and here he died.

It is said that the notion of composing the Austrian National Hymn was suggested to Haydn by the Prussian National Hymn which George I. had brought to England with him from his beloved Hanover; but however that may be, and whether the abominable melody known then and now as "God Save the King" inspired him or not, he determined to write a tune for his countrymen, and he did. On the Emperor's birthday in 1799 the new tune was played in every theatre in the Empire. Next to the *Marseillaise*, it is certainly the finest thing of the sort in existence.

Salomon had wanted Haydn to write an oratorio in London, and handed him a copy of a libretto of *The Creation*, which one Lidley had compiled from the Bible and Milton's "Paradise Lost" for Handel. The proposal came to nothing then, but when Haydn got comfortably settled down in Vienna van Swieten repeated the suggestion. This van Swieten had been a parasitic patron of Mozart. He was an enthusiast for the older-fashioned forms of music, and he had concerts of oratorio in an institution of which he was librarian. Haydn passed on Lidley's book to him, van Swieten had it translated and doctored to suit his own taste, and Haydn set to work. He faced the task with a degree of seriousness and solemnity which the music would never suggest. In April of 1798 it was given for the first time, privately, at the Schwartzenburg Palace; in March of the following year it was given publicly at the National Theatre. From the beginning it was an electrical success, and was immediately performed everywhere. Haydn had been guaranteed 500 ducats for it, but gained very much more. In the end, in the way I have previously mentioned, it became the property of the Tonkuenstler Societaet of Vienna. In England it was for over half a century the "Messiah's" one great rival. Lately it has dropped out of the repertoires of London and provincial choral societies. Fashions in sacred music, like fashions in popular preachers, have a trick of changing.



Page 33

No sooner was *The Creation* fairly launched on a fairly long career than van Swieten wanted another oratorio. Somehow—or perhaps naturally—he associated oratorio with England, and as he could not get the music from us, he did as badly as he could—he came here for the poetry. The words of nearly all the oratorios are ridiculous. Those of *The Creation* are no worse than the words of many by Handel. Van Swieten, however, did his honest best to provide Haydn with a downright silly book for his last work, and it must be admitted that by going to James Thomson's *Seasons* he succeeded. Like *The Creation*, it rapidly became popular in Germany, Austria, and England. It went out sooner than *The Creation*, and went out, I suspect, also like *The Creation*, never to return. It was given in April, 1802, at the Schwartzenburg Palace.

During the period after his return from England—or, more exactly, from 1796 till 1802—Haydn wrote most of his bigger church works. They may be sufficiently discussed here in a few lines; for, though they are still much sung in churches where the Pope's edicts are regarded merely as things to be laughed at, musically they are by no means of the same importance as his symphonies. Like all the Viennese school of church composers, Haydn thought nothing of the canons, and, indeed—also like the others—he seemed generally to think very little of the meaning of the words. He was serious and sincere enough, no doubt, but the man was a peasant, and in many respects his mind was a peasant's. He had quite a plausible excuse or reason to give for the note of jollity which prevails in his Masses. When he thought of God, he said, his heart was filled with joy, and that joy found a voice in his music. He spoke in perfect good faith, but with a little more brains he would have had other feelings than joy in his heart at the more solemn moments of the Mass. However, he had not, so he missed giving us music to compare with the finest parts of his symphonies and quartets. What he did write would serve well for the Empire Music Hall to-day were it not so entirely monopolized by churches like the Italian in Hatton Garden, and in its day it was highly thought of. The fact that the Princes of Esterhazy did not like to be made to feel uncomfortable in church had perhaps something to do with Haydn always feeling elated when he was going to write a mass—use is second nature. Not that there are no fine things in his sacred music; only they are rare, and the spirit of the whole is utterly undevotional. After all, being the man he was, having the mission he had in life to carry out, it may be questioned whether he could have done anything nobler, in which case it is a pity he touched church music. However, it is easily forgotten, and will be some day.



Page 34

Haydn wrote *The Seasons*, as it were, under protest, and he always declared that it gave him the finishing touch. He composed little more, but arranged accompaniments for Scotch songs for one Mr. Whyte, of Edinburgh. His powers failed fast. The last time he conducted in public, *The Seven Words*—now with the words—was the piece. This was in 1807. He was now without a rival in Vienna. Gluck had been dead twenty years, and Mozart had died in 1791; Beethoven was regarded as a great eccentric genius who would not rightly apply his undoubted talents. The last time Haydn was seen in public at all was on November 27, 1808. He was far too weak to dream of conducting. He was carried to the hall, and great ladies disputed as to who should be allowed to throw their wraps over him to protect him against the cold. He was taken away after the first part. He still lingered on a while. Next year—1809—Vienna was bombarded by the French, who had done the same thing in 1805, and when the victorious army came in a French officer visited him and sang “In Native Worth.” On May 26 Haydn called in his servants and played the National Hymn three times; he was then carried to his bed, and on May 29, he died.

He was buried at Hundsthurm Churchyard with military honours, the French invaders helping, on June 15. Mozart’s *Requiem* was sung later, *in memoriam*. In 1820 Prince Esterhazy had the remains, or such of them as had not been stolen, transferred to Eisenstadt.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMING UP

As small a proportion as possible of my space has been devoted to technical matters, and I have only used text-book terminology where no other served to explain what Haydn did in building up the symphony form. This spade-work of his Esterhazy period was of the greatest importance to himself, to Mozart and to Beethoven. He is the only composer of the first rank who did second-rate work of immense and immediate value to his successors, just as he is the only second-rate writer who ever in his age rose to be a composer of the first rank. Both as pioneer and perfecter and as great original composer I have sought roughly to place him. A few remarks about the man and his habits and characteristics may be added.

His methodical habits and neatness have already been mentioned. He must have been a first-rate companion, friend and master. His successive Princes loved him, his band adored him. He was generous; there is not a mean action to his discredit. His will was a wonder of good-feeling and discretion; and when old he was still glad to make money, that he might leave more to his poor relatives. He seems always to have been in love with one lady or another, and it was more by luck than anything else that he got into no serious scrapes. His method of working was as regular as his other habits. He sat at the piano extemporizing until he got his themes into



Page 35

some sort of shape, then he sketched them on paper and went to lunch. Later in the day he worked them out more fully, and proceeded to make a finished score. His scores are as neat as Beethoven's are disgracefully untidy. Haydn's way of composing at the piano—and it was Mozart's way, and Beethoven's, not to mention Wagner's—has been condemned by many theorists and theoretical writers. After seeing many of the compositions of these gentry, I wish they themselves would find and employ any other method than that they adopt at present. Haydn's cheerfulness has often been commented on, and it certainly pervades his music. He was also given to joking, but the one or two jokes which have been pointed out to me in his music would nowadays be considered in bad taste if people knew what they were meant for. Music has no sense of humour, and simply won't countenance it.

I suppose nine hundred and ninety-nine listeners in a thousand find Haydn's music a trifle tame. Now, I myself—in all humility let me say it—would not stand being bored for ten minutes by any composer, not though he were ten times as great as the greatest man who has ever lived. There is not a note of Haydn's I would not wish to hear, but there is a very great deal I would refuse to listen to twice, and much that I would only listen to in small bits at a time. Having willingly conceded this, let me warn anyone who takes up Haydn against expecting and wasting time in looking for the wrong thing, for qualities that are not in Haydn, and are not claimed for him. Especially have we to discard the text-book rubbish about his “service to art,” the “tradition he established,” about the “form stereotyped by him.” I have just said that in his Esterhazy time he was of great service to artists, but the music he then wrote was mainly second-rate, and I am now speaking of his best. Here his form is clear enough, but one does not listen to music merely for that. His form, indeed, became formalism and formality. It was natural to a man who had spent his life in looking for a principle that he should to a degree mistake the accident for the essence. Those first and second subjects with the half-closes between—they became as dreadful in their unflinching regularity as the contrapuntal formalism they drove out of fashion. In themselves they are a weariness to the flesh; if there were nothing but them to be found in Haydn, we should not go to Haydn. But there was a great deal more. There was a poetic content, a burden, if you like, a message, in his music, and it was different from anything that had been before or has been since.

There is nothing of the gorgeous architectural splendours of Bach, nothing of Bach's depth nor high religious ecstasy. His passion, joy and sorrow are all milder than Beethoven's. He has little of Beethoven's grandeur nor feeling too deep for tears or words. As for Mozart's beauty and sadness—that blend of deep pathos with a supernal beauty of expression that transcends all

Page 36

human understanding—Haydn is only with the others in having none of it. The spirit of Mozart dwelt in some ethereal region not visited by any spirit before nor after him. And, finally, in Haydn there is no touch of the romantic. Romanticism was a revolt against eighteenth-century pseudo-classicism, and it had its day, and did its work, and went out. Haydn did not want to revolt against classicism, nor even pseudo-classicism.

In fact, in music Haydn stands for classicism, and this is no contradiction of what I have written about his throwing away the formulas of his predecessors. When we talk of classical music we mean Haydn's. He created the thing, and it ended with him. He has sanity lucidity, pointedness, sometimes epigrammatic piquancy, of expression, dignity without pompousness or grandiloquence, feeling without hysteria. His variety seems endless, his energy never flags, and often he has more than a touch of the divine quality. He did not attempt to compose tragedies of life, for his temperament forbade it; but in his finest music he is never commonplace, because he had a strongly marked temperament and was poetically inspired. By dint of a sincerity that was perfect he made music which, though it is shaped in outline by the classical spirit, will be for ever interesting. To listen to him immediately after Tschaikowsky is hard, sometimes impossible, yet to me it seems anything but impossible that our descendants will be listening to him when students are turning to the biographical dictionaries to find out who Tschaikowsky was. A century ago Haydn was as fresh and novel as Tschaikowsky is now, and as overwhelming a personality in the world of music as the mighty Wagner. But time equalizes and evens things, and in another hundred years all that is merely up-to-date in musical speech and phraseology will have lost its flavour and seductiveness; but the voice that is sincere, whether the word is spoken to-day or was spoken a century ago, will sound as clear as ever, and the one voice shall not be clearer nor more convincing than the other.

HAYDN'S PRINCIPAL COMPOSITIONS

125 Symphonies and orchestral pieces. 31 Concertos.

176 pieces for the baryton. 77 Quartets. 14 Masses.

English canzonets.

The Spirit Song.

Several operas.

The Creation.

The Seasons.

The Seven Words.

A large number of pieces for harpsichord or piano.



BOOKS ABOUT HAYDN

POHL: "Joseph Haydn."

POHL: "Haydn and Mozart in London."

MICHAEL KELLY: "Reminiscences."

BELL'S MINIATURE SERIES OF MUSICIANS

COMPANION SERIES TO Bell's Miniature Series of Painters

Each volume 6-1/4 inches, price 1s. net; or in limp leather, with photogravure frontispiece, 2s. net.



Page 37

EDITED BY
G.C. WILLIAMSON. LITT.D.

NOW READY.

BACH. By E.H. THORNE.
BEETHOVEN. By J.S. SHEDLOCK, B.A.
BRAHMS. By HERBERT ANTCLIFFE.
CHOPIN. By E.J. OLDMEADOW.
GOUNOD. By HENRY TOLHORST.
GRIEG. By E. MARKHAM LEE, M.A., Mus.D.
HANDEL. By W.H. CUMMINGS, MUS.D., F.S.A.,
Principal of the Guildhall School of Music.
HAYDN. By JOHN F. RUNCIMAN
MENDELSSOHN. By VERNON BLACKBURN.
MOZART. By EBENEZER PROUT, Professor of
Music, Dublin University, B.A., Mus.D.
ROSSINI. By W. ARMINE BEVAN.
SCHUMANN. By E.J. OLDMEADOW.
SULLIVAN. By H. SAXE WYNDHAM, Secretary
of the Guildhall School of Music.
TCHAIKOVSKI. By E. MARKHAM LEE, M.A., Mus.D.
VERDI. By ALBERT VISETTI.
WAGNER. By JOHN F. RUNCIMAN.

Also in the Press.

SCHUBERT. By W.H. CUMMINGS, MUS.D., F.S.A.

Others to follow.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

WAGNER. BY JOHN F. RUNCIMAN.

“Here is Wagner written upon by one who knows all there is to be known about his music, and who is particularly sensitive to its beauty and its strength. Hackneyed as the subject is, the whole point of view is quite fresh, and there is an astonishing amount of matter compressed into a very small space. Altogether, the book has a critical value much beyond what is usually expected in publications of this class.”—*Manchester Guardian*.

“Mr. Runciman has not, of course, made any attempt to give an extended biography of the man, or indeed to analyse his work with any minuteness; to do that one would



require ten times the space which has been allowed him. But he has given us a rough word-sketch of the man and a more than adequate account of the musician. There is more thought, more 'body,' more common-sense in this booklet than in many a large tome that comes from Germany... Mr. Runciman is to be congratulated on an excellent piece of work—an essay that is acute, illuminating, and tactful.”—*Musical Standard*.