

## THE CULMINATING WORK

As Landon has noted, the “Surprise” Symphony “has justly become a symbol for all Haydn’s music.”<sup>14</sup> That is not only because the symphony became the emblematic Haydn genre but also because of the way Haydn transformed the symphony, not only in style but above all in status. When Haydn found it the symphony was just a distinguished sort of party music. He left it a monumental genre that formed the cornerstone of a *canon*, a publically recognized body of works deemed by lovers of art to have universal or defining value within their culture — a value, be it noted, no longer associated exclusively with a single social class. In their public eloquence, Haydn’s late “subscription symphonies” thus symbolized the nascent democratization of high art. In this way this former retainer to a princely house became one of the emblematic figures of the Enlightenment.

Which is not to say that Haydn consciously thought of himself as a *philosophe*, an Enlightened thinker, still less that he harbored (any more than Mozart did) the sort of subversive or anti-aristocratic sentiments we now tend, rather romantically, to associate with the era in which he lived. Nowhere in Haydn’s works, his correspondence, or the vast posthumous biographical literature about him, for example, does he make any reference at all to the French Revolution, the most cataclysmic political event of the century. Indeed, his very late works give us reason to believe that he deplored the Revolution’s consequences. In a pair of monumental Masses — “In Time of War” (*In tempore belli*, 1796) and “In Distress” (*In angustiis*, 1798, dedicated to Lord Nelson, the British naval hero) — Haydn appeared as a kind of Official Austrian or composer laureate, giving voice to his Empire’s determined opposition to Napoleon. The same military “topic” that produced giggles in Symphony No. 100 produces shudders when it accompanies the prayer for peace at the end of the Mass in Time of War.

Even the London “public” to which Haydn’s subscription symphonies made their appeal, while broader than any cohort he had previously addressed with his music, remained a largely aristocratic (or at least propertied) “high society”; the advertisements for Salomon’s concerts were always pitched to “the Nobility and Gentry” (the latter term referring to property owners, noble or not). Haydn was privileged to move at the very highest levels of the notoriously class-conscious British society. He found his access to the high aristocracy highly agreeable and took very seriously King George III’s invitation to settle permanently as a free artist in England under crown patronage.

This invitation was issued during Haydn's second stay in the English capital (1794–95), which was even more successful than the first. Haydn was received by the royal family on 1 February 1795, after which he wrote in his diary that "the King, who hitherto could or would only hear Handel's music, was attentive to mine."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the king's evident intention in trying to secure Haydn's permanent attachment to his court was to make another Handel of him, and to establish Haydn's concerts as a national institution in perpetuity, like the Handel oratorio festivals given at Westminster Abbey every year, which Haydn found dazzlingly impressive and inspiring.

In addition to royal blandishments and bedazzlement with the magnificence of English performance traditions, Haydn faced other enticements as well. His diary following the concert of 4 May 1795 contains this entry:

A new Symphony in D, the twelfth and last of the English;. . . The whole company was thoroughly pleased and so was I. I made four thousand Gulden on this evening. Such a thing is only possible in England.<sup>16</sup>

The newspaper reviews were fulsome in their praise of the work, showing Haydn to be already a sort of national monument. "He rewarded the good intentions of his friends," wrote one reviewer,

by writing a new Overture for the occasion, which for fullness, richness, and majesty, in all its parts, is thought by some of the best judges to surpass all his other compositions. A Gentleman, eminent for his musical knowledge, taste, and sound criticism, declared this to be his opinion, That, for fifty years to come Musical Composers would be little better than imitators of Haydn; and would do little more than pour water on his leaves. We hope the prophecy may prove false; but probability seems to confirm the prediction.<sup>17</sup>

In some ways the prediction was indeed borne out, because Haydn's London symphonies have never left the repertory, and all subsequent composers in the genre, up to our own time, have perforce had to compete with them. Haydn's quartets and symphonies, like Mozart's operas, became the first canonical works of their kind. The culminating symphony (no. 104 in the standard numbering), which bears the same nickname ("London") as the whole series of twelve, set a benchmark for structural efficiency toward which composers have ever afterward aspired. Its historical fame and its enormous authority demand that we inspect its first movement (preferably, as always, with score at the ready).

But before we do, it is important to understand why Haydn's structural efficiency came to command such authority. Haydn himself gave the reason for valuing it when he wrote of another composer's work in his diary that he flitted from idea to idea, made nothing of his themes, and so one was left "with nothing in one's heart."<sup>18</sup> The economy and logic of thematic development for which Haydn became famous (and which is often — erroneously — looked upon as the "main point" or motivating idea of the sonata form) was valued not as a demonstration of technical virtuosity but as an intensifier, and a deepener, of sentiment. With this caveat in mind, we may indeed find

Haydn's technical virtuosity as astounding as did his contemporaries, to say nothing of the generations of composers who have avidly studied and emulated his work.

The slow introduction (Ex. 10-10a) is proclamatory—the audience-summoning fanfare most typical of subscription symphonies. One lady in the first-night audience thought the rising fifth, dramatized by fermatas, was a recollection of a vendor's cry ("Fresh cod!") that Haydn heard in the market. (There was an old tradition of "Cryes" in English music, as we may recall from chapter 13.) Whatever its source, Haydn makes of the rising fifth and its immediate "tonal" inversion (falling fourth) the theme for one of the most compressed and concentrated symphonic structures ever composed.

EX. 10-10A Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, slow introduction

Adagio

Fl. *ff* *a2*

Ob. *ff* *a2*

2 Cl. in A *ff*

Bn. *ff* *a2* Solo *p*

2 Hn. in D *ff*

2 Tpt. in C/D *ff*

Timp. in D-A *ff*

I *ff* *fz* *p* *fz* *p*

II *ff* *p*

Vla. *ff* *p*

Vc., Cb. *ff* *p*

EX. 10-10A (continued)

The musical score consists of several systems of staves. The first system includes three staves: two treble clefs and one bass clef. The second system includes four staves: two treble clefs, one bass clef, and one bass clef. The third system includes two staves: one treble clef and one bass clef. The fourth system includes four staves: two treble clefs, one bass clef, and one bass clef. The score features various dynamic markings such as *ff*, *p*, *fz*, and *f*, as well as performance instructions like *Tutti*, *Solo*, and *Vlc.*

EX. 10-10A (continued)

[Tutti]

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

Tutti  
*ff*

*pp*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*pp*

*pp*

*ff*

*pp*

*ff*

*pp*

EX. 10-10B Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, beginning of the Allegro

Allegro

I Vln. *p*

II Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc., Cb. *p*

EX. 10-10B (continued)

EX. 10-10C Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 32-7

## EX. 10-10C (continued)

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system has four staves: a treble staff with a melodic line, two middle staves with harmonic accompaniment, and a bass staff with a bass line. The second system has three staves: two treble staves and one bass staff, all containing sustained chords. The third system has four staves: a treble staff with a melodic line, two middle staves with harmonic accompaniment, and a bass staff with a bass line. The music is in D minor and 3/4 time, featuring a melodic line in the first violin and a bass line in the first bassoon.

In its scant sixteen-measure span the slow introduction encompasses a complete tonal trajectory, enunciated through a rigorous process of *thematische Arbeit*. It is, in short, a minuscule but a fully elaborated sonata form in its own right. Compare mm. 1–2 with mm. 7–8 and mm. 14–15, and you will see a progression from tonic (D minor) to relative major (F major) and back. The progression out is very direct, taking no more than four measures. The progression back (mm. 9–13) is, as always, more tortuous; it uses its extra measure to reach a FOP (actually a series of unstable diminished harmonies) and gains extra “psychological” length by doubling the harmonic rhythm and then doubling it again. Both the progression out and the progression back are carried by a clear motivic derivation from the theme: its rhythm is abstracted and applied to stepwise melodic motion, while the inversion contour is maintained by the use of a rhythmically compressed answer in the first violins that falls (usually a semitone, inflected in m. 5 to a

whole tone to produce the marvelously pithy modulation to III) to counterbalance the rising bass. On regaining the tonic in m. 14–15, Haydn with equal economy of means inflects the inversion to a falling fifth in place of the original fourth, reaching IV (harmonized as a “Neapolitan sixth”) and thus preparing a half cadence on V, so that the slow introduction might properly provide the running leap into the tonic and the new tempo.

What is noteworthy about the diminutive “sonata form” thus constructed is that it has only one theme. That may not seem remarkable in a 16-measure composition, but it is certainly remarkable in the 277-measure Allegro that follows. This nearly monothematic symphonic movement, by so advertising its economy, looks like a deviation from a norm if a bithematic exposition is taken as “normal” symphonic procedure. It is so taken in most descriptions — the same descriptions that usually describe the overall shape of the movement, with its exposition, development, and recapitulation, as “ternary” on the *da capo* model, rather than an expanded (“symphonic”) binary form.

This bithematic ternary model, still taught in most textbooks, originated not in compositional practice but in earlier textbooks written in the 1830s for use in conservatory and university courses at Paris and Berlin. And that is why the first movement of Haydn’s “London” Symphony is indispensable to any properly historical treatment of the composer and his musical accomplishments. The discrepancy between Haydn’s own culminating and epitomizing symphonic movement and the later academic description of “sonata form” is an integral part of the history of nineteenth-century music and music education, but it ought not color our understanding of eighteenth-century musical style. For Haydn and his audience, the sonata form was made intelligible through a tonal, not a thematic, contrast. The thematic requirement was not contrast but *Arbeit*. These were the musical events and processes that left one with “something in one’s heart.”

And that is what Haydn provided in this movement with such remarkable concentration. In contrast to the opening theme of the “Surprise” Symphony, the opening theme here consists of a full sixteen-bar parallel period, eight bars to a half cadence (as shown in Ex. 10-10b), and then a repetition to a full cadence. The elision of the full cadence by a dramatic tutti signals the first major step along the tonal trajectory: thirty-four measures without a caesura (as it were, without a gulp of air), ending on the “V of V” to prepare the arrival of the “tonicized” dominant.

A closer look at the transitional or modulatory passage shows its close rhythmic relationship to the theme, further evidence of deliberate frugality of means. The rhythm of the main melody in mm. 32–35 (Ex. 10-10c) reproduces and repeats the rhythm heard at the beginning of Ex. 10-10b. The rhythm of the first violins, flutes, and (especially) first oboe at mm. 50–51 (Ex. 10-10d) is distinctly related to both the rhythm and the pitch repetitions in mm. 3–4 of Ex. 10-10b. Once this point is noticed, one notices further that the four-note pitch repetition first heard in Ex. 10-10b is often reproduced and extended in the bass (cf. Ex. 10-10e).

And so it may occasion in us a bit less anachronistic surprise when the first theme returns wholesale to express the secondary key. This time the transitional passage that interrupts it with an elided cadence makes reference to the theme’s syncopated inner voice as well as to both of the motivic relationships already pointed out — more insistence on



INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LIFTS OFF

EX. 10-10D Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 50-53

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Haydn's Symphony No. 104, measures 50-53. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Fl. (Flute):** Melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including slurs and accents.
- Ob. (Oboe):** Harmonic accompaniment with sustained notes and slurs.
- Cl. (Clarinet):** Rests throughout the measures.
- Bn. (Bassoon):** Rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes.
- Hn. (Horn):** Rests throughout the measures.
- Tpt. (Trumpet):** Rests throughout the measures.
- I Vln. (Violin I):** Melodic line mirroring the flute part.
- II Vln. (Violin II):** Rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes.
- Vla. (Viola):** Rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes.
- Vc., Cb. (Cello/Bass):** Rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes.

extreme thematic parsimony. Indeed, the only "new" thematic material in the exposition comes in the coda, though even here there are definite (if subtle) motivic correspondences with the main theme: those with score in hand will notice that the melodic figure in the first violins in mm. 104, 106, and (in other instruments) mm. 108 and 110 is the inversion of the opening figure in the theme (and we have encountered far too many important inversion relationships in the structure of this movement to regard this one as a happenstance).

After so much demonstrative economizing on thematic content in the exposition, one is ready for anything in the development, where motivic economy is always prized. But even so, one cannot fail to be impressed by the yield Haydn manages to harvest from the two-measure repeated-note idea first heard in the third and fourth measures of Ex. 10-10b. The first restatements of it after the double bar (mm. 124-127) are nearly literal ones, merely substituting a minor-inflected semitone for the original whole tone in the second measure. Thereafter, the idea is altered melodically in various ways over the invariant original rhythm: cf. the exchange for winds and bass in mm. 131-35 (Ex. 10-10f).

## EX. 10-10E Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 58-60

Fl.

Ob. <sup>a2</sup>

Cl.

Bn.

Hn.

Tpt.

I  
Vln.

II

Vla.

Vc.,  
Cb.

## EX. 10-10F Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 124-35

I  
Vln.

II

Vla.

Vc.,  
Cb.

Musical score for Ex. 10-IOF (continued). The score is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It features five staves: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), and Viola/Van Cello (Vla. Vc., Cb.). The Flute and Oboe parts are marked "Solo" and "(p)". The Flute part begins with a rest, followed by a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, then a half note G4. The Oboe part begins with a rest, followed by quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, then a half note G4. The Violin I and II parts play a melodic line with a falling second interval: G4, A4, B4, C5, then a half note G4. The Viola/Van Cello part plays a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, then a half note G4. The Bassoon part is not visible in this excerpt.

It would be an instructive exercise to analyze this development section to see where (if anywhere) the motive extracted from Ex. 10-10b, or at least one of its constituent measures, does *not* figure in the melodic elaboration. Even where the principal melodic line seems to have another source (e.g., Ex. 10-10g, expressing the FOP through a recall of the coda or “closing theme” at mm. 104 ff), the chugging repeated quarters in the bass are still derived from the main motive (and the way they are split by the bassoon in mm. 150–55 leaves no doubt as to the purposefulness of the reference). But one could go much farther than that if one is willing to allow that the falling seconds in Ex. 10-10g and its counterparts in the coda is motivically related to the falling second in Ex. 10-10b and its many echoes in the development section. (Alternatively, one could describe the first-violin figure in the first, third, seventh, and ninth measures of Ex. 10-10g as the inversion of the first measure in Ex. 10-10b.) In that case one could describe Ex. 10-10g as a contrapuntal montage of the movement’s two main motivic ideas.

## EX. 10-10G Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 (“London”), I, mm. 146–55

Musical score for Ex. 10-10G. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It features four staves: Bassoon (Bn.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), and Viola/Van Cello (Vla.). The Bassoon part is marked "Solo" and "(p)". The Bassoon part begins with a rest, followed by a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, then a half note G4. The Violin I and II parts play a melodic line with a falling second interval: G4, A4, B4, C5, then a half note G4. The Viola/Van Cello part plays a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, then a half note G4.

## EX. 10-10G (continued)

The musical score for Ex. 10-10G (continued) shows the final measures of a movement. The key signature is D major. The score includes parts for Bassoon (Bn.), Horn (Hn.), Trumpet (Tpt.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello/Double Bass (Vc., Cb.). The music features a double return of the main theme. The final measure is marked [Tutti] and [f].

Recalling that the main theme begins (as so often with Haydn) on the third degree of the scale, one might well predict the way in which the double return is prepared. The reassertion of the original key carries a heavier emotional payload than usual in this movement, since the development section had been confined so perspicuously (and so unexpectedly) to minor tonalities. Indeed, thanks to some particularly ingenious deceptive cadences, it is a wider range of minor tonalities than we have ever encountered before in direct succession, including two ( $C\sharp$  and  $G\sharp$  minor) that lack even a secondary function in the home key, making the passage in Ex. 10-10g a farther-out FOP than any previous Haydn symphony had reached.

To the very end, then, Haydn was expanding the horizons of his signature genre and enhancing its import in response to the new importance of the subscription public to his art. The radical economy of thematic content together with the generous expansion of the tonal trajectory combine vastly to enlarge the music's "meaningfulness." The apparent thematic miserliness makes introversive reference pervasive: that is its true purpose and achievement. In such a situation practically every phrase relates motivically to music previously heard and putatively forecasts the music to come. And projecting this network of introversive signaling over an enriched tonal compass has the effect of increasing the scope—one might almost say the spatial reach—of introversive resonance and allowing it to combine more freely with the traditional vocabulary of pathos. The more consistent and rigorous the thematic process, and the more adventurous the tonal range, the more one is left with in one's heart.