

GOING BEHIND THE NOTES: EXPLORING THE GREAT PIANO COMPOSERS
AN 8-PART LECTURE CONCERT SERIES

**HAYDN: THE TRUE CLASSICIST, AND SOME OF HIS
PREDECESSORS**

Dr. George Fee
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Renaissance Keyboard Music

Performance: Pavan: The Earle of Salisbury
Galiardo
A Gigge: Doctor Bull's My Selfe

William Byrd
(1543-1623)
John Bull
(1562-1628)

J. S. Bach

Jiri (Georg) Benda

Performance: Three Sonatinas
G Minor
B-flat Major
A Minor

Jiri Antonin Benda
(1722-1795)

Franz Joseph Haydn: The True Classicist
The Man and His Life (1732-1809)
Haydn's Music

10 Minute Break

Haydn's Piano Music and Playing Haydn's Piano Music
Examining Wit and Humor in Haydn's Music

Performance: Sonata in C Major, Hob: XVI: 50, L.60
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro Molto

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

HAYDN READING

- Beghin, Tom and Sander Goldberg, eds. Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric. University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Beghin, Tom. The Virtual Haydn: Paradox of a Twenty-First Century Keyboardist. University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Butterworth, Neil. Haydn: His Life and Times. The Two Continents Publishing Group Ltd., 1977.
- Geiringer, Karl. Haydn: A Creative Life in Music. University of California Press, 1968.
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(A translation of the two earliest biographies of Haydn by G. A. Griesinger and A. C. Dies)
- Landon, H. C. Robbins. Haydn: Chronicle and Works, 5 vols. Indiana University Press, 1976-1980.
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- Wheelock, Gretchen A. Haydn's Ingenious Jesting with Art: Contexts of Musical Wit and Humor. Schirmer Books, 1992

KEYBOARD WORKS OF HAYDN FOR YOUR LISTENING

- "The Virtual Haydn: Complete Works for Solo Keyboard." Tom Beghin on 7 historical keyboards in 9 virtual rooms. Naxos, 12 CD's, 1 DVD.
- "Haydn: Complete Piano Trios." Beaux Arts Trio. Phillips, 9 CD set.

HAYDN'S BEST-KNOWN SOLO KEYBOARD WORKS

- Sonatas, Hob. XVI: 20, 23, 27, 32-33, 35-37, 40, 43-44, 48-52
- Fantasia in C Major, Hob. XVII: 4
- Andante con variazioni in F Minor, XVII: 6

HAYDN'S BEST-KNOWN NON-KEYBOARD WORKS

- 108 Symphonies (esp. #'s 6-8,22,45,88,92,94,97,100-104)
- 83 String Quartets (esp. Op.20, Nos. 1, 5; Op.50, No. 3; Op.64, No.5; Op.74, No.1; Op.76, Nos. 3-6; Op.77, No.2)
- 45 Piano Trios (esp. Hob XV:18-31)
- Cello Concerto #2 and Trumpet Concerto
- 6 late Masses
- Oratorios: The Creation; The Seasons

MEDIEVAL, RENAISSANCE, AND EARLY BAROQUE CHORAL COMPOSERS

- Guillaume de Machaut (1300-1377); John Dunstable (1390-1453); Guillaume Dufay (1397-1474); Johannes Ockeghem (1410-1497); Josquin Des Pres (1450-1521); Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594) Orlando di Lassus (1532-1594); Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

HAYDN: THE TRUE CLASSICIST , AND SOME OF HIS PREDECESSORS

RENAISSANCE KEYBOARD MUSIC

Our main subject today is Joseph Haydn and his music. However, I believe it is important to devote some time to music composed previously to Haydn.

It is unfortunate that while the world very well knows visual art from the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque periods, only highly trained musicians are usually aware of any music before that of Bach and Handel. Medieval, Renaissance, and early Baroque music is absolutely no less magnificent than is the painting and sculpture from those same periods. When a person takes a one-year conservatory music history course, the curriculum does not even get to Bach until well into the spring semester.

There are those who believe that Western European music reached its peak by 1525. This may sound crazy, but it is no crazier than saying that art never surpassed what Raphael, Leonardo and Michelangelo achieved. Their contemporaries in music were just as sublime.

There are also those who believe Western European music reached its peak with the works of Bach and Handel. This is also a justifiable belief. It would equate to saying that painting peaked with Rubens, Rembrandt, and Velasquez. I would love to further discuss early music. But I will not because most of the great earlier music is choral and not instrumental, and we are here to experience keyboard music. However, until about 1780, keyboard music was of far less significance than choral literature.

It is not as easy to self-educate about Medieval and Renaissance music as it is Mozart or Beethoven. But I hope I have just planted a seed and that some of you will explore it because some Renaissance music is undisputedly among the greatest music ever written. A considerable amount of this music is now on Youtube. I urge you to explore it. Don't let the first piece you come across be the only one you listen to. Listen to a wide variety. I have listed some of the many major early music composers in your program. There are easily obtainable music appreciation and music history books which discuss this music in easy to understand terms. If I were at the end of my life and could only hear a bit of music I believe that I would choose to listen to the choral music of Josquin Des Pres, who died in 1525, than, for example, Chopin's piano music.

Even though they are almost always inferior to the great choral music, thousands of keyboard pieces were written during the three centuries before Bach and Handel. The earliest extant keyboard music is from England and Italy relatively early in the 14th century. In the 15th century Germany produced a significant amount of keyboard music. Most keyboard music until this point was intended for the organ and tended to have a religious function. Ancestors of the organ go back to the ancient Greeks, and in the Middle Ages primitive organs were used in services. The clavichord, where the string is touched by a piece of metal, and the harpsichord, where the string is plucked, both originated around 1400. What a long history those instruments have had, compared to the piano, which did not come into common usage until the 1770's.

The 16th-century was a century of dancing and has even been called “the century of the dance. “This led to an explosion of dance music for keyboard in France, England, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Germany.

A crucial development occurred around 1580 in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The harpsichord, which in England was called a virginal, began to develop its own literature as distinguished from the organ. Not only was this music idiomatic to the virginal, but composers were inspired to create highly sophisticated music which was unprecedented. For about 50 years, this so-called “English Virginalist School” blossomed. The virginal was not only popular with the wealthy. Virginals were sometimes even located in barber shops for customers to play as they waited.

One of the greatest composers of all time was the Englishman, William Byrd, who lived from 1543 to 1623. This is one generation before that of Shakespeare. Of course, there were composers in England before Byrd. But it was Byrd who earned the title “the Father of Musick.” Almost single-handedly he laid the foundation for future English music. He wrote in all styles and genres- church music for both the Anglican and Catholic churches, songs, and keyboard music, which he advanced from the rather primitive to the sublime. Of his 470 compositions, 125 were for keyboard. There is a purity about his music which is unique, and his music expresses a wide diversity of emotions.

Byrd himself was a devout Roman Catholic in an environment where it was not safe to be a Catholic. However, he managed to escape harassment because of the high esteem in which he and his music were held, as well as from the influence of his powerful friends.

Dr. John Bull, living from 1562 to 1628, was of Shakespeare’s generation. The staggering technical advances in his 140 pieces of keyboard music are astounding in their virtuosity and brilliance. This has led to Bull having been called the “Franz Liszt of the English Virginalists.” It is unfortunate that he is primarily known for this aspect, since he also wrote some of the most complex, intellectual music ever written. Bull was the first composer who was an academic, having received his Bachelor of Music from Oxford, his Doctor of Music from Cambridge and his having taught at Gresham College in London. His name has nothing to do with the later cartoon character of that name used to depict England. The portrait we have of Bull when he was 26, reproduced in your program, shows a handsome man with a sensitive, expressive face.

Bull was apparently a rascal. He had to resign his college teaching position after he “got one Elizabeth Walter with child and had to marry her.” At age 51, in 1613, he was accused of adultery. Expecting punishment, he fled England to Brussels claiming, without any basis known today, that he was being persecuted because he was a Catholic. He became the principal organist in Antwerp and served until the end of his life. While many of his compositions became lost in the process of his flight, his exodus proved extremely important for the future of all keyboard music. This is because he brought many of his musical techniques and approaches to the Continent and shared them with his friend, the very important Dutch keyboard composer, Sweelinck, who then transmitted them to other parts of Europe.

It was common to write dances in pairs, with the first being in a slow duple time, and the second in a faster triple time. The most common pairing was a Pavane and Galliard. The Pavane was a slow,

processional dance, and its name may be derived from the word for peacock, implying a strutting. The first Earle of Salisbury was Robert Cecil, a close advisor to Queen Elizabeth and King James I (Queen Elizabeth called him her "little elf" and James I called him "my little beagle.") He died in May of 1612, and we can assume Byrd wrote the Earle of Salisbury Pavane in memory of his friend, since it was written in that year.

The Galliard was a vigorous, jumping dance. The Gigge was a dance which appeared in farcical stage shows in England in Bull's time. In these shows it was associated with light-heartedness and vulgarity, and Bull's choice to depict himself with a Gigge may be telling.

Before discussing the Byrd or Bull pieces I will play, I want to show you in six minutes how Western European music developed over its first 1000 years.

GO TO PIANO:

Show how polyphony, imitation and tonality developed from Gregorian Chant thru the 18th century.

PERFORM: Byrd Pavane and Galliard and Bull Gigge

It is a shame to not deal with so many other keyboard composers of the later Renaissance and the Baroque. Orlando Gibbons, of the generation after Bull, was perhaps the most poetic of all the English Virginalists. Girolamo Frescobaldi, organist at St. Peter's in Rome for three decades, played a very pivotal role in the history of keyboard music. The Austrian, Johann Jacob Froberger wrote deeply moving, highly emotional music. Francois Couperin and Jean Philippe Rameau are giants in the history of French keyboard music. By the way, Rameau's music, though written for the harpsichord, works well on the piano. Couperin's is far more difficult to successfully realize on the piano, and many authorities believe it is best left to harpsichordists. (However, I do know one pianist, Jeffrey LaDeur, who performs it very successfully on the modern piano.) George Frideric Handel and Domenico Scarlatti, with his 555 one-movement sonatas, hold special places in the hearts of keyboardists.

J.S. BACH

I am only going to spend a small amount of time on J.S. Bach and his music. It is not because I fail to recognize his importance. Quite to the contrary, there is not time to do him justice, and you all are already quite familiar with Bach's music. The word "Bach" in German means "brook," and as Beethoven said, "he is not a brook, he is a sea!" J.S. Bach was one of the greatest geniuses in any field to ever walk the earth. His 1,000 works culminated 900 years of previous musical development, all of which was based on counterpoint, which, as I explained earlier, means multiple horizontal melodic lines. However, with his powerful, inevitable harmonic sense he pointed the way for the music of the following centuries. If one could name only one composer as most representative of the past 1,000 years of Western European music, it could only be JS Bach.

There is not a lot one needs to know about Bach the man, and there really isn't a large amount to know, with his having lived so long ago and not having left us much personal information.

What is important to know about Bach the man is the following:

1) Bach had a very strong, powerful, forceful personality. He was a stubborn, uncompromising person with a quick temper. He was known to have been in fights and his perpetually blunt candor did not win him friends and made him extremely difficult to get along with.

2) Bach was a workaholic who spent every possible minute of his life studying other composers' music and always growing deeper as a composer. Observers commented on his continuous "unheard of zeal in studying and his indefatigable diligence." His own statement: "I have had to work hard; anyone who works just as hard will get just as far" is laughable in its latter portion. But it is very revealing in its first portion.

3) Bach's total devotion to his Lutheran religion dominated his life. I can only think of a few composers whose religious devotion matched J.S. Bach's and those would be Franz Liszt, Cesar Franck, and Anton Bruckner, all three of which were extraordinarily devoted Catholics. Will Durant aptly wrote that "Bach's works are the Reformation put to music." Bach said that the aim of music "should be none else but the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul. Where this is not remembered there is no true music, only infernal jingling and bellowing." It is known that Bach owned an extensive library of theology books.

Bach's mindset, musically and otherwise, was conservative. His musical contemporaries were expressing the new Rococo and Classical ideals in philosophy, music, and the arts. Their music frequently aimed to be pretty. Bach was representative of a generation or more before his own time. His music is rarely "pretty." It is instead deeply and sublimely beautiful. He represents a Baroque outlook – one of stubborn conviction, grandeur, boldness, and intense seriousness. His mental world was not one of lightheartedness, playfulness, simplicity, or easy-going tolerance. His mental outlook was stern and sober.

How did Bach play music? His playing was known to be very fiery, in comparison with his contemporaries. But before one takes that too much to heart it must be remembered that it is known for sure that tempi in Bach's part of Germany in his time were very sluggish. Also, fire in performance involves more than tempo.

How should one play Bach's music today? Ask 1000 different musicians and you will get 1000 different answers, and nearly all of them are defensible. There is possibly nothing in music with a more widespread variety of answers than the question of how to perform Bach's music.

The good news is that Bach's music succeeds, no matter what path a performer takes. By the way, I believe that, while memorizing all music before performing it is advisable, many pianists would more successfully realize Bach's music in performance if the score were present. Doing so would also allow a larger quantity of Bach's music to be learned instead of spending so many hours practicing out of fear of the dreaded inevitable memory slips, which in Bach's music are especially a nightmare to get out of.

You are all very familiar with J.S. Bach's music and I will proceed onwards.

JIRI (GEORG) BENDA

Many people have the mistaken idea that musical composition leapt from JS Bach to Haydn, from the culmination of the Baroque to the maturity of the Classic. Bach and Handel were actually reactionary conservatives musically. Their musical style was out of vogue by 1720 even though they composed for 30 or more years after that, Haydn and Mozart did not reach maturity until the 1770s. Therefore, there is a half century of musical style which most people know very little about. What happened during this time was that the Baroque musical approach of continuously spinning out parallel horizontal melodies representing one basically unchanging mood was replaced by the classical approach of writing short phrases, comprised of melody and accompaniment, and which could contrast with one another. This did not happen instantaneously. Remnants of the old style remained, while the new was explored rather primitively and simplistically.

The only giant among the multitude of lesser keyboard composers during this fifty-year stylistic era which eventually found its maturity in Haydn and Mozart, was Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the second son of JS Bach, and one of four sons of JS Bach who achieved prominence as composers. He warrants much time and attention. He was representative of, and in fact the leader of, the Berlin school of composition. They brought a fervent intensity and introspective seriousness to composition, in comparison with the Italian composers who at this time were generally writing in a light, easily flowing style. However, in C.P.E. Bach's place today I am substituting one of C.P.E. Bach's numerous disciples and followers, the Bohemian composer, Georg Benda.

The people of Bohemia, the western part of today's Czech Republic, are among the most innately musically talented in the world. Mozart believed them to be "the most musical people in Europe," and there were two famous sayings: "Every Czech is a musician," and "Every Czech is born with a violin under his pillow." Exceptional musical talent was the ideal ticket to escape the universal rural poverty which afflicted the land, and Bohemian instrumentalists were highly coveted by the musical establishments in the several hundred states which comprised the not yet united Germany.

The Benda family of Bohemia was a musical dynasty just as the Bach family had been in Germany and the Couperin family in France. Franz Benda became the concertmaster for Frederick the Great in Berlin and brought his brothers into the orchestra. Georg arrived in Berlin in 1742 at the age of 20 and played violin in the orchestra. Most every musician dreamed of eventually being the head of a German court musical establishment and Georg received that opportunity in Gotha when he was 28. As was typical of such a position, he was expected to primarily write church music and chamber music. But fame came to him from his Italian opera and his many Singspiels, which were light operas in German, rather than Italian. His primary fame came from being the first to write successful melodramas. A melodrama is where the orchestra accompanies speaking rather than singing.

Benda's music reflects the North German influence of deep feeling as well as the Italian influence of graceful melodies. The poet Schubart called him: "one of the foremost composers that ever lived – one of the epic makers of our time!" The composer and dictionary author E.L. Gerber hailed him as: "the

pride of the Germans amongst living musicians.” Mozart wrote: “of all the Lutheran Kapellmeisters Benda has always been my favorite.”

Having retired somewhat early, and needing income, Benda assembled his previously written solo keyboard works and composed additional ones for publication. They comprised 16 three- movement sonatas and 34 one- movement sonatinas. Benda is the only composer other than Domenico Scarlatti known to have composed sonatas or sonatinas consisting of just one movement. Benda’s operatic fame resulted in these keyboard works selling very well. In fact, far more people purchased these works than those of the most famous keyboard composer of the time, C.P.E. Bach.

I was motivated 43 years ago to write my doctoral dissertation on Benda’s solo keyboard sonatas and sonatinas. No one anywhere had ever written more than a few paragraphs on them and I believed someone should. They also provided me a vehicle to analyze music and performance practice from this post-Baroque, pre-Classical period.

As a man, Benda was known for his brilliant mind and profound interest in philosophy – initially of the Enlightenment, and later, of early Romanticism. He spoke Latin, Italian, French, German and Czech, and was famous for his wit and aphorisms. He was also known for the intensity of his emotions, his moodiness, and his hypersensitivity. His absentmindedness and forgetfulness were also legendary and infamous and became the subject of articles in journals which cited various humorous examples.

Benda was rather heavy, and his large head included a prominent forehead and a broad nose. His eyes were said to be lively, energetic, and intense. A widower at age 46, the older he got, the more he craved solitude and he spent the last 16 years of his life living alone in the woods outside of tiny German villages.

I will play for you three of his one -movement sonatinas. The first and third of these are today found in various anthologies of keyboard music. You can sense the melancholy poignancy in the first, the tenderness in the second, and the energy, typical of Berlin influenced composers in the third. They serve as examples of what is called “preclassical music,” and represent one of the styles of music being composed before Haydn and Mozart brought the Classical Era to its summit. While we don’t know precisely when they were written, it is likely that these works were written in the 1770’s or early 1780’s. You’ll note that I am adding some embellishments in some of the repetitions, as would have been done in Benda’s time. These pieces are not profound music. However, as Leopold Mozart wrote, “what is slight can still be excellent.” They furnish an example of the fact that there is much good, even if not great music, which today is little known and rarely played. It is noteworthy that Benda, along with many others in Germany in his time, was an advocate for the supremacy of the clavichord among keyboard instruments. The enormous popularity and widespread use of this delicate and intimate instrument in 18th century Germany is often overlooked.

PERFORM: Benda 3 Sonatinas

JOSEPH HAYDN: THE TRUE CLASSICIST

Haydn: The Man and His Life (1732-1809)

Why do I like Haydn's music and why should you? Above all, I believe it is because it makes us feel good, and able to believe that all is right with life and the world. His music restores our faith in goodness, in humanity, and in ourselves. Perhaps his music does this more effectively than any music. The musicologist Erich Hertzmann believes this to be true and has called Haydn "the most therapeutic composer of them all."

Mozart's music also does this. But remember that Mozart was a rebel in many respects, and his music is steeped in ambiguity. Beethoven's music does this. However, Beethoven was a revolutionary and his triumph is only achieved after superhuman struggling. Schubert's music does this. But he was a modern man in many respects – full of paranoia and angst, wrestling with darkness, and seriously probing the human condition every step of the way.

Haydn's music explores life in all its manifestations. But Haydn was, as a man, at peace, and his music is the true representation of Classicism. What is Classicism? It is, above all, judicious balance. All the elements of life and living are present -but in a healthy proportion. It is sane. It is orderly. It is logical. It is not at all lacking feeling-it is full of genuine emotion. It is just not out of control.

Haydn as a man was possibly the most emotionally balanced person to ever compose great music. I also believe he was quite possibly the nicest.

If you were seeking a truly reliable friend amongst all the great composers, Haydn would probably be your person. Think for a moment about what an hour would be like with some of the great composers. If you were with the egomaniac Richard Wagner, you would not say a word since he would constantly be pontificating. If you were with Schumann, you would have to do all the talking since he probably would be lost in his own inner thoughts and say almost nothing. Chopin would be the ultimate in politeness but probably reveal nothing of himself or show any sincere interest in you. However, he would be a more pleasant companion than the sullen, anti-social Debussy.

Haydn would have been interested in you and would probably have asked if there was something he could do to help you. He also would have been reliable in following through. After all, he didn't get the nickname, "Papa," without having done a lot of good for a lot of people. He is not known to have had any enemies in the competitive back-biting world of 18th century classical music and he was never known to have criticized another composer's music. It seems as if everyone who knew him loved him. Haydn himself noted that people "can see in me that I mean well towards everybody."

He was a country boy and he never abandoned the values his parents instilled in him: a disciplined work ethic, a love of neatness and order, a piety, and a sense of responsibility.

You would have noticed a complete lack of ego in Haydn, except that he was known to have delighted in telling people, in his thick rural Austrian dialect of German, how he once shot three different grouse with the same bullet, and that they were subsequently served to Empress Maria Theresia when she

visited the court where he was employed. He would probably have also told some good fish stories, since he was a fisherman when he could find the time. Haydn's pleasantness was a constant throughout his life and he radiated a beatific quality in his older years. Even when suffering dementia in his last years, his sweetness and benevolence was always in evidence.

Haydn was always impeccably dressed. He was quite short, with exceptionally short legs, which looked even more so because he always wore a style of pants which only went up to the hips rather than the waist. From childhood until the end of his life, when most people had stopped wearing wigs, the first thing Haydn did every day was put on his wig. He considered himself ugly and was always very self-conscious regarding his yellowish skin color, as well as his large, extremely pock-marked nose with its nasal polyp which at times complicated his breathing.

Until the age of 59, when he traveled to London, Haydn's life was typical of the life of a musician of his times. (He was born the same year as George Washington, 1732.)

Haydn's father made wagon wheels on the Esterhazy estate, at today's exact border of Austria and Hungary, where Franz Liszt would grow up three quarters of a century later. In fact, that area, called the *Bürgerland*, has gone back and forth between these two nations over the centuries. While Hungarian influences are abundant in the area, Haydn's ancestry was purely Austrian. One may still visit his thatched roof birth home, a picture of which motivated Beethoven to exclaim: "How extraordinary that this great man, Haydn, was born in such a modest dwelling."

Haydn's father sang at home, and it was discovered that little *Sepperl*, an Austrian diminutive of Joseph, when not yet 6 years old had a remarkable voice. His parents desired that he become a priest and believing that good vocal training would help prepare him for the priesthood, sent him to a parish boarding school in a nearby town. Choirs were made up of young boys in those days and the director of the choir of the renowned St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna happened to visit Haydn's school and hear him sing. He immediately recruited the 8-year-old lad for his choir. This was one of the most prestigious choirs in the world. However, every choirboy, when his voice broke, faced a decision – undergo castration which would permit staying in the choir or seeking a fortune as an opera singer, or else find oneself on the street with no means of support and no vocational training. Haydn opted for the latter and found himself on the streets of Vienna with his only possessions being three shirts and an old worn coat. He rented a room on the top floor of an apartment building. The top floor was definitely not a penthouse. It was an attic, where the holes in the roof allowed the rain and snow to pour through, and there was no stove. There were a great many stairs to ascend to the top, and the prestigious apartments were those located on the ground floor, which avoided the flights of stairs.

Fortunately for Haydn, living on the ground floor was an internationally renowned composer and voice teacher, Niccolò Porpora. He engaged Haydn to accompany his voice students, many of whom were prominent professional singers. Haydn had already been exposed to the great conservative church music at St. Stephen's Cathedral. Now he assimilated firsthand how operatic music was written and performed. Although he didn't generate much income, he received an education. To supplement his meager accompanying income, he taught some lessons and formed a small band to play at parties and

receptions, or to serenade people. With every remaining spare minute in a day, he taught himself theory and composition by studying treatises on the subject and employing a "worm-eaten clavichord." Despite all the years of choral singing he had never been taught any music theory.

Haydn's next nine years consisted of this financially "wretched existence," during which, with his customary cheerfulness, he said: "I envied no king his lot." Late in life he said: "Young people can see from my example that something still may come from nothing. What I am today is the product of utmost poverty."

When Haydn was 27 years old a nobleman happened to be present at one of the occasions where Haydn's little band played and offered Haydn a position as the head of his small musical establishment. A few years later, the powerful Prince Esterhazy learned of Haydn's work, and engaged him as the head of his extremely significant musical establishment. The Esterhazys were the richest and most powerful Hungarian family, and shortly after Haydn's employment, built the second most magnificent palace in Europe. The only one grander was Versailles, which served as Esterhazy's model. Haydn would remain at this position for 30 years. He never earned much salary and during his first 19 years of service, the Prince owned the rights to any compositions which Haydn wrote. Haydn was bored living out "in the sticks," and was only rarely able to spend time in Vienna, where so much was going on artistically. However, he prized the fact that he could count on lifetime tenure, and was free to experiment musically, knowing that the Prince would always heartily approve of all his compositions. "I was set apart from the world, there was nobody in my vicinity to confuse and annoy me in my course."

What were Haydn's responsibilities? -Everything pertaining to music. This included, among many other things, composing and performing symphonic and chamber music, composing operas, rehearsing his own and others' operas, acquiring and repairing instruments, and working out any issues involving the players under him. It was a huge responsibility which left him little time for anything else in life other than work. At some periods there was no time to compose anything which was not specifically intended for performance at the Esterhazy court.

Haydn was so levelheaded that he rarely made a mistake in his life. However, he really goofed in his choice of a wife. The girl he truly wished to marry went off to enter a convent, and her father pressured, or at the least, encouraged, Haydn to marry his other daughter, whom no one had ever shown any interest in marrying. From early on it was evident that she had no interest in music nor did she understand his profession at all, though the legend that she used his compositions to curl her hair is probably fiction. It did not help their relationship that Haydn's musical responsibilities took all his time and energy. She devoted herself to doing charitable volunteer work organized by the clergy. She also donated a considerable portion of Haydn's salary to the clergy, which the pious but also frugal Haydn believed to be excessive. They eventually separated, and she moved to Vienna. They remained on good terms, with Haydn agreeably providing her financial support. They had never had any children.

Haydn had a mistress for a period of years, a young Italian opera singer who was employed at the Esterhazy court. She apparently was considered musically expendable. However, Haydn intervened, and her employment was continued, with Haydn frequently simplifying her arias to make them more suited

to her limited vocal abilities. Her two children were apparently fathered by Haydn and he generously supported her and her children, even after she had returned to live and work in her native Italy.

Haydn's life basically consisted of churning out and rehearsing music. That's what 18th century composers did. Though, he never left the dull, marshy Austro-Hungarian hinterlands for 30 years, other than rather brief stays in Vienna, his fame spread widely. Anyone, anywhere, who knew anything of music knew some of Haydn's symphonies and chamber music.

When Haydn was 59, an old age in those days, his prince died. The brother took over and drastically cut the music budget. Therefore, Haydn was now able to accept an invitation to go to London and premier new symphonies. The reception accorded the elder statesman of the musical world was overwhelming. For a year and a half, he was wined and dined by royalty and countless members of the English aristocracy. (Many people do not realize the great love and appreciation for music which the English people have exhibited for centuries. While England has produced relatively few native composers of great stature, it has produced outstanding instrumentalists and singers, and London's immense concert life, in terms of public support and enthusiasm, has exceeded every other major city for the past 300 years. London, and not Vienna, Paris, or New York, remains the real capital of the music world today.) Haydn, the humble country boy, could not believe the attention he was given in London. It absolutely amazed him. However, his humility never changed. He wrote: "I prefer being with people of my own status."

London paid well for its music, and after a lifetime of daily donning a servant's uniform, receiving a salary comparable to a butler, and having no savings, Haydn returned to Austria a wealthy man, having earned in 18 months, a couple hundred thousand dollars of today's buying power. With his modest needs, he was now financially set for life, and could enjoy being generous with people. He spent considerable time trying to think of, and locate, descendants of people who had been good to him earlier in his life, so that he could make them beneficiaries in his will. A second successful trip to London followed a few years later. After that trip, he was asked back to work for the Esterhazys. It was at a greatly reduced workload, appropriate for this later stage of his life and it allowed him to live in Vienna much of the time. He didn't need the income but accepted the offer in order to serve the cause of music.

Haydn's last several years were spent exclusively in Vienna, in peaceful retirement. It is interesting that when Napoleon took Vienna, he sent an honor guard to be stationed outside Haydn's home as a symbol of respect for the internationally revered composer. Haydn died peacefully few days after this. A 77-year life was extraordinarily long in those days. But it was not only a long life-it was in many ways a beautiful life. I can't say that he lived a "happy" life in the sense that many people would define as happiness. Basically, his life was work, and it was throughout his life always said that he "could never be idle" However, his life was also about doing for others. I have noted that many of the finest people I have known in my life were those who lived for others, and took satisfaction from what they attempted to give, rather than from what they received in life. Haydn near the end of his life was able to say: "Consider me a man whom God has granted talent and a good heart....I believe I have done my duty and have been of use to the world through my works."

The shelling of Vienna by the French under Napoleon in Haydn's last few days was symbolic. That, and his death, symbolize the end of the classical era – in music and in the world. The balanced, and at least on the surface, civilized classical world was over. (It is interesting to note that the tables were turned in 1918 when the great representative of French music, Claude Debussy, lay dying. The Germans were shelling Paris and the death of Romanticism would coincide with the end of World War I.)

Haydn's Music

Haydn's musical output is gargantuan and it is extraordinary that it consists of so many masterpieces: 104 symphonies, 83 string quartets, much other chamber music, 62 piano sonatas, 45 piano trios, 14 masses plus two oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, which rank, along with Handel's as the greatest oratorios ever written. Haydn was a slow developer and was not like Mozart who, even as a teenager, wrote masterpieces. If Haydn had died at 35, as did Mozart, he would be little known today. Haydn at age 35 was just beginning to write high-quality works. However, by the age of 40, he was pouring forth masterpieces, and by his 50's, his works became of no less stature than those of any composer in history.

Despite the huge quantity and quality of music which Haydn wrote, he claimed that he did not work quickly. His manuscripts contain few corrections and he said that this was because "I do not write until I am sure of the thing." He apparently always composed at the keyboard. "I sat down, began to improvise, sad or happy according to my mood, serious or trifling. Once I seized upon an idea, my whole endeavor was to develop and sustain it." Both parts of this statement are crucial to remember- the improvisational basis and origin of his music, and the skill which he applied in consciously developing his ideas. He pointed out that some other people's music frequently failed to go anywhere.

Haydn was not the first to write symphonies – there were far more than 10,000 symphonies written in the 18th century. But Haydn set the standard for what a symphony could be. While he did not literally write the first string quartet, everyone recognizes Haydn to be the "father of the string quartet." His early piano sonatas were study pieces for students. However, many of his middle and late period piano sonatas are worthy to stand beside those of Mozart and Beethoven. His piano trios are arguably a greater contribution than Mozart's piano trios, and there are seven times as many.

It is unfortunate that Haydn was required to spend so much time composing and rehearsing operas. In the decade from 1780-1790 Haydn had to prepare and lead over 1,000 Italian opera performances for the Esterhazys, which means an average of 100 per year. That is 42% as many as the entire Metropolitan Opera in New York produces per year, with its annual budget of 365 million dollars. Last season the conducting duties at the Met were shared by 24 conductors, and there are many other people at the Met constantly rehearsing singers. Haydn did all that work and was also responsible for composing many operas. In all he wrote two dozen operas. I don't know how one man was able to do it, and still also find time to write hundreds of chamber works and symphonies. If that time writing, preparing, and performing operas had been able to be devoted to composing more symphonies and string quartets, posterity would have been much more enriched. Despite all of Haydn's work in the operatic genre, his many operas have not remained in the standard repertoire because, as he himself

explained, they were tailored specifically for the entertainment of his employer at the Esterhazy palace opera house. He did not believe they would be successful, even in his own day, in other locations.

Haydn's music is important not only for its own inherent substantial value, but also for its influence on many composers in his time and afterwards. Since Haydn wrote in virtually all genres his influence was much more widespread than those composers who primarily only wrote operas or chamber music. Beethoven testified on numerous occasions to Haydn's large influence on him.

The Mozart and Haydn relationship was especially beautiful. Twenty-four years separated them in age. They saw each other on a number of occasions and if Haydn had lived full-time in Vienna during the years when Mozart did, they would have shared many more occasions together. They were well acquainted with each other's music before they met personally, and it is clearly documented that each significantly influenced the other's compositions. Mozart only praised musicians whom he felt deserved his praise, and very few ever received it. But he idolized Haydn's music, as well as Haydn the man.

Haydn, the most famous musician in the world, traversed Vienna broadcasting his belief that Mozart's talent was far beyond his own, and singing Mozart's praises at every opportunity to enhance Mozart's reputation with the Viennese, who in large part did not appreciate Mozart in his lifetime. He even told people that he would not write a string quintet because Mozart's were so sublime. I wish I could have been a fly on the wall when those two geniuses were together. Such warmth and mutual respect was clearly shown – the older master for the young upstart and the super-talented young man for his esteemed senior. Haydn was devastated when, in London, he heard of Mozart's premature death.

Perhaps this is a good place to explore why posterity has rewarded more popularity to Mozart's music than to Haydn's. Partly it is due to the fact that it is easy to romanticize and glamorize a charismatic talent which reveals itself in early youth, and then, like a meteor, is extinguished at age 35. Mozart lends himself to today's emphasis on marketing. Haydn's understated personality and life was the antithesis of Mozart's.

Mozart as a man was ambiguous, as I presented last month, and so was his music. The emotions behind it seem to almost break its bounds, although it never quite does. But it pulsates with drama, which is extra powerful because it so wants to break out of the classical constraints and comes so very close to doing so.

Haydn's music can portray darkness, and literally does so in the opening of his oratorio, "The Creation." One of the great moments in all music is, after the darkness of Chaos, when the words "Let there be light" are illuminated in soaring C Major.

By the way, there was a performance of "The Creation" very shortly before Haydn's death where he was literally carried to the concert hall since he was too infirm to walk. At that sublime musical moment I just mentioned, the audience burst into applause and turned to look at Haydn, who smiled meekly and pointed upwards to Heaven. Heaven is where Haydn considered the source of his musical ideas. He would consciously pray before commencing a composition, and at the conclusion of many of his manuscripts, he would write "Laus Deo", Praise God. He said that if his composing was not going well, "I

walk up and down the room with my rosary in my hand, say several Aves, and then ideas come to me again.”

Regardless how dark Haydn’s music can be the darkness seems to have no problem accepting its boundaries. I believe it is a genius who can create drama and greatness by staying within limitations. However, today we tend to relate to those composers who attempt to break out of boundaries.

Haydn’s music is built on proportion, on balance, on discipline, and on the utmost economy. It has been said that figuratively one could throw a Haydn symphony on the floor and none of it would break. Haydn is the ultimate classicist.

Mozart’s music is more Italianate than Haydn’s, which is not surprising since his home for the first 2/3 of his life was in Salzburg – just over the Alps from Italy and which clearly reflected Italianate influences. Mozart’s music gracefully and elegantly glides and dances through time. It has a polished, seductive, suave, voluptuous quality. Haydn, being of simple, rustic, peasant stock, produced music which is more earthy, and representative of the Austro-Hungarian melting pot where he grew up.

Mozart’s music appears to be the more obviously melodic and lyrical. His musical descendent would be Schubert. Haydn’s music is more obviously motivic, with small motives, rather than longer themes, being used as the basis for development. His musical descendent is Beethoven. Much of the effect of Haydn and Beethoven’s music stems from what they did architecturally with their basic motives, rather than an intrinsic appeal of longer themes.

Sing examples from symphonies – Mozart 40th, Schubert 8th as opposed to Beethoven 5th, and Haydn 88.

Haydn, being over a generation older than Mozart, wrote music which was more influenced by music of the Baroque. As a child, he was singing and constantly hearing conservative church music 16 years before Mozart was even born. When Haydn was in his 40s, and marooned in the Austro-Hungarian countryside, Mozart as a youth was traveling around Europe absorbing all the most recent music.

Mozart’s music seems to slither and slide with its extensive use of melodic chromaticism – notes not in the key of the immediate portion of the piece. Haydn’s use of chromaticism is less frequent, though he is the more adventurous in his frequent employment of unusual keys.

Mozart’s music, with its abundant lyricism, can give an impression of sounding more personal and emotional, which most people today usually more easily immediately relate to.

Many people today do not realize that the 19th-century did not relate to Haydn’s music at all, and it was almost entirely ignored from his death until after World War II- nearly 150 years. Yes, almost entirely ignored all that time.

Perhaps, before our break, this is the place to pay tribute to H. C. Robbins Landon, who deserves more credit than any other single human being for the post-World War II Haydn Renaissance, the most important Renaissance of any composer. (Despite Mendelssohn’s over-hyped Renaissance of JS Bach in

1829, JS Bach's music had not been totally forgotten by many professional musicians after this death. Haydn's music virtually was -and for twice as long.)

It was Robbins Landon whose lifework included getting Haydn's complete works into print and onto recordings. When he began his efforts in 1949, less than 10% of Haydn's nearly 1,000 works were in print anywhere in the world, and virtually nothing had been recorded. Dr. Landon's goals were reached in his lifetime, as well as his authoring a massive 5-volume, sorely needed, definitive biography of Haydn.

Though an American by birth, Landon spent his life after the age of 21 in Europe, most notably in Vienna. He did an enormous amount of work for BBC Radio and TV and was immensely popular with the general public because he was so charismatic and enthusiastic. He was larger than life—a giant in physical as well as intellectual terms. His obituaries aptly referred to him as a "Titan." Many musicologists are sometimes introverted or compulsively driven as they try and unearth new information as well as master all of that which is already known. Landon spent as much time as any of them ever did tracking down old manuscripts in monasteries, libraries, and archives across Europe, in the effort to find countless lost works. But he brought an electrifying, theatrical quality to everything he touched, and he lived life as a *bon vivant*. A prominent fellow musicologist wrote: "He communicated an enthusiasm that for once endowed musicology with the excitement of a detective story." That same writer paid tribute to Landon's "boundless generosity."

I would like to share how generous Robbins Landon was to me, not in any way whatsoever for what it says about me, but for what it says about this remarkable, unique human being. He had been invited to be in residence for a few months at Indiana University, in Bloomington, Indiana where I was pursuing my doctorate. The year was 1976, and he was asked to give public lectures on music in Europe in 1776, as well as to speak to seminars, give master classes, and do some conducting. I couldn't believe it—this was the closest thing one could get to having Haydn himself in residence. I was so excited that I had trouble sleeping during the nights before he would speak—and what a speaker he was!

After his addresses I would approach him and ask questions, which he thoroughly and enthusiastically answered. On one occasion he said, in his grand manner, "Young man, why don't we talk more as I walk to my residence." When we arrived there, as I still had more questions, he invited me in for tea. As I told him of my interest in early pianos, he vibrantly exclaimed, "Young man, if you can get yourself to Europe, I will get you access to a lot of early pianos and historical places!"

Three months later I was in Dr. Landon's home in Vienna as I played on Haydn's own piano which Haydn had had shipped from London, and which Dr. Landon had purchased at a time when it surprisingly was available. During lunch Dr. Landon presented me with a magnificent ticket for the Vienna State Opera performance of "Don Giovanni" that evening, and letters of introduction to his colleagues at various museums in Europe. One year later, after his having learned that I was going to be married, there arrived in the mail the just released newest volume of his Haydn biography.

What accounted for such kindness? I was not a musicology major, and at that age I knew very little about playing Haydn well. I can only assume perhaps Dr. Landon responded to curiosity and enthusiasm,

and I attribute the rest to the goodness and love that lay in this great man's heart. I cannot help but share with you my appreciation and indebtedness to him for the inspiration and kindness he extended to me over 43 years ago. It also illustrates a lesson that in any field one should not be afraid to approach a legendary figure. I was brought up to believe that those who rose to the top of their professions usually got there in large part because of who they were as people, and those are exactly the people one should desire to encounter.

10 MINUTE BREAK

Haydn's Piano Music and Playing Haydn's Piano Music

Although Haydn knew how to play all instruments, he was not an especially adept pianist, unlike Mozart and Beethoven who were virtuoso pianists. "I was a wizard at no instrument, but I knew the strength and the working of them all."

Solo piano music, as a genre, was viewed as private music until the 19th century when the profession of the touring virtuoso arose. Therefore solo piano music in the 18th century was primarily written for the player to enjoy in solitude, and on many occasions the composer did not invest solo piano music with the most powerful emotions.

In those times nearly all pianists were women and they frequently accompanied their husbands or fathers who usually played the flute or violin or who sang. Males usurped the piano only when the times were calling for pianists to travel and concertize.

Previously to Beethoven, it was typical for composers to tailor their piano sonatas and concerti for particular occasions and performers, and frequently they wrote works to specifically suit a particular player's abilities. Quite often a sonata would also be dedicated to that player. For example, Haydn wrote six of his 62 piano sonatas for the von Auenbrügger sisters, twenty-some-year-old daughters of a prominent Viennese physician, psychiatrist, and scholar. Haydn wrote what he intended to be his last piano sonata specifically for Marianne von Genzinger, a doctor's wife and an especially sensitive amateur pianist and close friend. He loved to visit the von Genzinger home in Vienna and receive a home-cooked meal as well as warm friendship.

Haydn's pianos, called fortepianos, were very different from those of today, and Haydn only composed with the piano specifically in mind relatively late in life. His earlier keyboard sonatas were composed with the assumption that they would be played on either the harpsichord or clavichord.

Haydn's pianos were very light action and required only about 17 grams to put down a key. (Today's pianos require about 55 grams.) Yet, later in his life Haydn found the piano too strenuous to play, and eventually his doctor forbade him from playing the piano, although he was still permitted the clavichord. Note that this was the fortepiano, the ancestor of today's piano, which was physically overwhelming to him. Imagine his horror if he were attempting to play today's huge pianos with their massive iron frames! Haydn valued light action pianos so much that he urged buying the less prestigious Schanz pianos because of their especially light action.

Subtlety in every respect is a prerequisite when playing Haydn's music and it is very challenging to fully achieve the subtlety his music needs on today's grand pianos. They are built for the power and projection one desires when playing the music of Liszt, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff, and are not innately conducive to the subtlety required for Haydn's music.

A case can be made that Haydn's solo keyboard music frequently sounds more effective when performed on the instruments Haydn wrote for, rather than on the modern piano. I heartily recommend the recordings of Haydn's Complete Works for Solo Keyboard by Tom Beghin, which are recorded on seven different instruments in nine different acoustical conditions, which simulate what Haydn would have heard in his time. These recordings are listed in the program. Haydn's keyboard music yearns for the instruments of his times. Yet one pianist has magnificently mastered the art of playing Haydn's music on the modern piano—Menahem Pressler. He used to tell his students to “smile” with their fingers, and he certainly does that himself. Not only are his recordings from the 1970's of the complete Haydn Piano Trios with the Beaux Arts Trio exemplary Haydn playing, they were what put Haydn's nearly four dozen piano trios on the map after over a century and a half of neglect.

My advanced piano students have consistently had far more challenges playing Haydn's music well than any other composer's music. I also find his music especially difficult to realize on today's pianos. His music is a much tougher “nut to crack” than Mozart's or Beethoven's music, and demands an entirely different set of skills than those needed to play 19th century music.

When Haydn's music is performed similarly to music composed later, it loses its essence. Lightness is a crucial ingredient in Haydn performance. Taste was the admonition to performers from all the 18th century composers and writers.

I believe that Haydn's faster movements are frequently played too quickly today. So much of the wit and humor can become lost if the pieces are played too briskly. The music is meant to speak and converse with the listener. It is like a language where one needs to hear the punctuation and the phrasing. The music needs to breathe so that it can be fully comprehended and absorbed by the listener. Even when joyous, the music needs to preserve its poise.

It is crucial that Haydn's music appear to be improvised. That is how he commenced his compositional process and the performer today needs to feel as if he/she is inventing the music on the spot. The physical appearance of the player can even be important in Haydn's music. The player should appear to become one with the music. I find artificial facial gestures, which are prevalent in many performers today, to be off-putting and offensive. But natural physical gestures are part of the communicating of Haydn's works to listeners. As CPE Bach wrote: “Ugly grimaces are, of course, inappropriate and harmful; but fitting expressions help the listener to understand our meaning.”

Humor is more difficult for nearly all pianists to communicate than melancholy. When humor is present in music, the performer needs to consciously play to the listener. The goal should frequently be to make the listener laugh-inwardly or outwardly. I remember one memorable performance where my wife and I could not help but laugh out loud at the marvelous way the Beaux Arts Trio was interpreting some of the music. The combination of the genius of Haydn and the realization of the music by these

legendary masters of chamber music was too much to be contained. I was not in the least chagrined by the nasty glances from people nearby. I could only feel sorry that they seemed immune to the hysterical events occurring in the music. They appeared to not “get” the obvious jokes.

I believe that much of the success of Haydn’s music is performer dependent. He provided us the jokes. Can the player tell the joke effectively? Can the player keep the listener in suspense wondering what will come next? 18th century musicians stressed the crucial role of the performer in bringing a piece to life. Some opined that that a masterful performance of a mediocre piece would have more success than a mediocre performance of a masterful piece.

For more information regarding Haydn performance, you can read my eight page article, “Relevant Advice from the 18th Century On Playing 18th Century Music,” found on my website, www.dersnah-fee.com/essays-educational-materials.html

Examining Wit and Humor in Haydn’s Music

Haydn’s music frequently evidences a grandeur and sublimity. His music can be noble and serious and evidence the strength of character which was in the man. There is a sincerity and simplicity in his music. Creating beauty was paramount to him and above all, there is a dignity to his music (One wonders if there is any dignity left in today’s world? Perhaps that is one reason why his music is not more widely related to today.)

I wish I could show you prime examples of these serious qualities However they are primarily found in his symphonies, his masses, his oratorios, and his greatest string quartets. I urge you to listen to these. Some are listed in the program. Sadly, we don’t often hear them anymore in live concerts, since concert programmers lean heavily on big 19th century works, believing those works will entice more listeners to attend concerts.(I personally am not sure that is the best path to so frequently take.)

One important aspect of Haydn’s music was his unique ability to excel at creating comedy along with serious beauty. In Haydn’s time music was to be comic OR serious. Custom dictated that the two different styles were supposed to be kept separate. Haydn consistently combined the two styles in the same pieces. His beauty and seriousness contain playfulness and his playfulness can contain depth of feeling. He frequently placed them side-by-side in a piece, and he himself said: “Next to a serious thought you will find a cheerful one.” His first biographer described how his works were “often planned to tease the audience by wanton shifts from the seemingly serious to the highest level of comedy. ”Most listeners all over Europe reveled in what Haydn was doing. Only the Berliners as a group seemed to resist his approach, and in Vienna, Emperor Joseph II was a rare dissenter when he termed Haydn “a trickster.”

It is important that we now explore the differences between humor and wit.

Let us first explore humor. Humor is simple and straightforward. It is genial. It can be mindless and still make one laugh. Many people find the Three Stooges to be humorous – although perhaps I should say, males find them humorous, since I have yet to meet a woman who finds them funny- or a male who

does not find them funny. No knowledge, wisdom or experience is needed to laugh at inane antics. Humor can be childish. An infant can make us laugh, and infants need no education to laugh.

Wit is something much more complex. Wit is associated with the mind. There is an intellectual component. Young children do not express it or understand it. The recipient of wit needs familiarity with the language and conventions of the subject matter. A person who does not know the intricacies and nuances of a language, even if they know the basics of the language, will not “get” wit in that language. The person conveying wit is, in effect, conversing through inside jokes, expecting the recipient to be knowledgeable in the subject.

Humor can be appreciated in varying degrees. With wit, the listener either “gets” it or does not. There is little middle ground. Wit demands concentration. The listener must remain alert and on the same wavelength as the conveyor, attempting to catch every detail and nuance. Humor can be appreciated with only halfhearted attention.

Wit involves relationships. It can involve connections or the juxtaposition of things that do not belong together. It surprises us. It can subvert our expectations. It can present us with novelty. It can cause us to feel a sense of wonder. It can keep us in suspense. It can deceive us. It can disturb us. It can mock us or others. It can cut like a knife.

Humor is sincere. It can be stupid, but it usually seems spontaneous and natural. Wit can have an element of being contrived and being pre-thought out and calculated. It can seem to come from the mind and go to the mind, rather than originating in the heart and going to the heart. There can be a component of artifice in wit, which is what Joseph II perceived in some of Haydn’s music.

Those conveying wit need to be skilled at such. They are rather like a magician who needs to know how to pull off tricks.

So, what has this to do with Haydn?-----Everything.

Humor has abounded in music for many centuries. For example, imitations of cuckoos and birds are plentiful, and Beethoven’s music is loaded with humor- an earthy, “elbow in the ribs” type. One could go on for hours citing examples of humor in music and Haydn’s music clearly has far more humor than anyone else’s.

However, wit is much more musically sophisticated than humor. Wit was a significant ingredient in 18th - century music, and no one employed and exemplified wit with more consistency and mastery than Joseph Haydn.

One can make the case that Haydn’s music is often more sophisticated than Mozart’s. Music is a language, and to fully understand the greatness of Haydn’s music one needs to be acquainted with the syntax, grammar, and vocabulary of classical music. We will discuss aspects of this in more detail at the piano in a few moments.

The 18th- century was an age of conversation in many respects. Verbal repartee was practiced as an art all over Europe, and music in the 18th century was likened to conversation and speech in many ways. Music was primarily performed in small rooms with only a very few listeners. A common ensemble was the string quartet, where four string players tossed musical ideas back and forth as if conversing with each other.

The Classical Era was the Age of Reason. Emotion would transcend reason in 19th- century artistic thinking. However, in the 18th- century, rationality and the emotions were sought equally. 18th- century composers, with Haydn a prime representative, were as concerned to intrigue their listeners through the language of music, as they were to move the emotions of their listeners.

Since music is a language, players of music in the 18th century were conscious of the parallels between music and the literary arts of rhetoric and oratory – the arts of how to persuade a listener. Most of the treatises regarding the performance of music drew on the close similarity of the language of music to language as described in rhetoric and oratory. We address this in other presentations with reference to musical performance. However, the close correspondence between music, rhetoric and oratory was equally relevant to musical composition. Music is a language with its own vocabulary, grammar and syntax, and Haydn knew better than anyone how to manipulate these elements of the language of music to create wit, as well as humor.

How humorous and how witty was Haydn as a person? There are tales of Haydn being playful and mischievous in his childhood, and some of them are apparently true. But was he prankster later in life? Was he a joker? I asked Dr. Landon this question, as well as what impression I should give to my students and friends as to what Haydn was really like. Dr. Landon responded by saying: “In many ways Haydn was a rather austere man.” He then continued by quoting the description Haydn’s first biographer supplied after spending much time interviewing Haydn: “He smiled consistently, but he never laughed out loud.” Haydn referred to himself more than once simply as “cheerful,” and wrote later in his life, “Since God has given me a cheerful heart, He will forgive me for serving him cheerfully.” So we see that along with the humor and wit in his music, Haydn as a man was our balanced classicist.

Haydn gained valuable experience composing musical humor at a young age. When he was 19, he had the opportunity to provide music for comic farces which took place at a theater in Vienna which was infamous for these raunchy burlesques. The first of his works in this genre was entitled “The Lame Devil,” and there were others which followed. These productions blatantly sought to garner uproarious responses from the audience, and it launched Haydn into his lifelong practice of consciously writing to elicit positive audience reactions. It also showed him the powerful effect that musical humor could have on audience members, especially the paying public.

To fully discuss the examples I will play would require employing considerable musical terminology. I will try to keep that to a minimum and hope that I am able to show at least some of the wit in the music. However, humor is also abundant in Haydn’s music and no musical education or experience is necessary to sense and feel the humor, the capriciousness, the whimsicalness, and the high spirits of Haydn’s

music. Haydn has been called a “master of amusement” and “the best joke teller in the history of music.” His music can make all of us feel good inside, which we all certainly can use in the 21st century.

Haydn said later in life when he felt fatigue when composing: “There are so few happy and contented people here below; grief and sorrow are always their lot; perhaps (my) labors will be a source from which the careworn, or the man burdened with affairs, can derive a few moments of rest and refreshment.” Haydn’s music continues to provide rest and refreshment, and it always will if we take the time to savor it.

Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI: .50, L. 60

Haydn thought he had written his last piano sonata when he arrived in London early in 1791. However, in London he encountered a school of female virtuoso pianists who inspired him to write three more piano sonatas. Theresa Jansen was one of the young twenty-some-year-old piano wizards who became a recipient of a sonata. She was also a dancer and a composer herself and invited Haydn to be in her wedding in 1795 to Gaetano Bertolozzi, an art dealer, and the son of a famous engraver. Haydn was delighted to accept her invitation.

Haydn was fascinated to discover that pianos made in England were of an entirely different construction than those made on the continent, and that the prominent pianists there, being Clementi students and playing these sturdier English pianos, had a much more virtuosic approach to the piano than the more elegant approach of their Viennese counterparts. His three Sonatas written for these English pianists and pianos reflect a much bigger, bolder approach than his previous 59 keyboard sonatas.

I am going to use one of these, the 15-minute C Major Sonata, Hoboken XVI:50, and Landon 60, as our vehicle to examine in some detail. (Anthony van Hoboken was a Dutch collector living in Vienna who, over many decades, catalogued Haydn’s works. It was Christa Landon, the first wife of Robbins Landon, and who died in a plane crash in 1977, who revised Hoboken’s chronology of the piano sonatas, employing an “L.” for her order.) The performance of the 15-minute sonata will conclude today’s presentation.

GO TO PIANO: Show aspects of the wit and humor in Haydn’s Sonata in C Major

PERFORM: Haydn: Sonata in C Major, Hob XVI: 50, L. 60