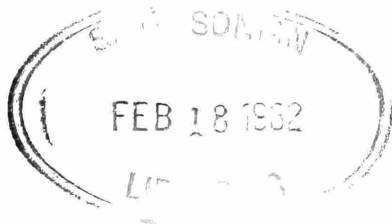


The Musical Instruments of Joseph Haydn

AN INTRODUCTION

Helen Rice Hollis



ABSTRACT

Hollis, Helen Rice. *The Musical Instruments of Joseph Haydn: An Introduction. Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology*, number 38, 33 pages, 18 figures, 1977. This paper is concerned with the musical instruments of Joseph Haydn's time—his early experiences with the instruments and his use of them. Sections are devoted to keyboards, instrumentation of the piano trios, wind instruments, timpani, and the baryton. The paper contains material that has not appeared previously, and it includes 18 illustrations of musical instruments, some of which are in the Smithsonian collection. The latter have never been assembled for publication in this context and some have never been published at all. Dr. H. C. Robbins Landon, internationally known musicologist and recognized authority on Joseph Haydn, has written a foreword.

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Foreword

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov used to say that Haydn was the greatest orchestrator who ever lived. Opinions may differ about the superlative, but it is clear that Haydn was an orchestrator of immense ability and astonishing technical knowledge. Thus it is curious that there is no survey of Haydn's use of musical instruments, and Mrs. Hollis's essay fills a real gap. Being a gifted pianist in her own right, she is more than competent to write discerningly and sensitively about Haydn's principal instrument (which he persists in calling "clavier," a wooly term at best). Mrs. Hollis is also connected with the Smithsonian Institution, the musical instruments collection of which includes one of the most beautiful fortepiani extant of the south-German school, and also a fine Broadwood of the year 1794 (in which year Haydn composed his greatest keyboard sonata, No. 62 [52] in E flat, the autograph manuscript of which is in the Library of Congress); and so it is appropriate that the Institution should be host of Mrs. Hollis's useful and timely monograph.

Vienna, June 1976.

H. C. ROBBINS LONDON

Acknowledgment

Of the many students of Joseph Haydn who are indebted to Dr. Landon, none is more deeply so than I. Without his generous encouragement, suggestions, corrections, and additions, I should not have had the audacity to attempt this study.

HELEN RICE HOLLIS

The Musical Instruments of Joseph Haydn

AN INTRODUCTION

Helen Rice Hollis

Haydn's Early Experiences with Musical Instruments

The first musical instrument Joseph Haydn heard was a small harp played by his father, self-taught, to accompany folk songs.

In a thatched cottage, that was little more than a peasant's hut, little Joseph joined his mother and father in the singing, it is said, "with perfect intonation and a beautiful voice."¹ There must indeed have been something exceptional about his voice; as late as 1795 in London he wrote of singing to his own accompaniment at the urging of the guests at a musical soirée attended by the king and queen and other royal personages, but he said, self-deprecatingly, that his voice was only the size of his top little finger joint.

When shown a picture of the simple Haydn dwelling in Rohrau, Beethoven on his death bed was moved to say, "Strange

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that so great a man should have been born in so poor a home!"² If physical comforts were minimal, however, the spiritual life of the family was enriched by sincere and unaffected enjoyment of music and deep and cheerful religious faith, both strong forces in the life of the future composer.

The schoolmaster of the village played the violin, and it is said that Joseph, longing to play it too, took two sticks and imitated his motions, keeping time so well that he attracted the attention of his elders.

Once established in Hainburg, where his selfless parents sent him even before he was six years old to give him opportunities for education not available in their small village, the little boy quickly became familiar with all the instruments in use there. It is not certain on how many of them he actually became proficient, but he later wrote that in his sixth year he could take part in the singing of masses in the church choir and play a little on the clavier (clavichord and possibly harpsichord) and on the violin.

If the story of his learning to play kettle drums may be apocryphal, it has been repeated often enough to have become legend. He had been placed in the care of a family connection, Johann Mathias Franck, who was a school principal as well as choirmaster of the church of St. Philip and St. James in Hainburg. Franck was disconcerted by the death of his drummer, who was needed desperately for the processions of the Week of the Cross. Franck hit upon the idea of using Joseph in the emergency, gave him some sticks, showed him the strokes, and left him to practice. The child took a bread basket covered with a cloth, set it on a chair, and beat on it with such vigor and concentration that he failed to notice that the flour was spilling out and soiling the chair.³ Bread basket or no, he was able to march in the procession playing the kettle drums hung on the back of a hunchback, who was small enough to put the drums within easy reach. What a pity no artist recorded the event, but Haydn

may have recalled it many years later during his London concert appearances when he surprised and impressed a timpanist by demonstrating to him exactly how he wanted a passage performed.

Franck had available to him an extensive library of music in manuscript. Besides the organ, the instruments of the church included violins, cellos, double bass, trumpets, horns, and timpani. Haydn was often put to work copying parts and inevitably became familiar with a large body of sacred music as well as instrumentation. Life was hard in Hainburg, and Franck severe, but the eager boy made the most of his varied musical experiences in the two years spent there. He was then ready for the more sophisticated musical life of Vienna when the opportunity came to become a choirboy under the direction of Karl Georg Reutter, court composer and choirmaster of St. Stephen's Cathedral.

Reutter worked his choirboys mercilessly, fed them poorly, made them learn to sing and sight-read expertly, and to play clavier and violin, but his concern for them went only so far as they were useful to him, and no general training in musical composition and theory was provided. Haydn once said, "Proper teachers I never had. I always started right away with the practical side, first in singing and in playing instruments, later in composition."⁴

But just to be in Vienna was an education in itself — no city of Europe was richer in music; it was a passion with the court and the nobility. Haydn heard and participated in a vast number of performances of the music of contemporary composers during his nine years at St. Stephen's, and his diligence was extraordinary. In later life he recalled that while his comrades played at their games, he took his small clavier (an old worm-eaten clavichord) and went to his miserable little attic quarters to play it in solitude. When Haydn's voice broke at the onset of adolescence, Reutter had no further use for him nor concern for his

future; for a time the youth was in dire straits indeed. Slowly, however, his situation improved as he came to the attention of members of the nobility, the only hope for a musician of his day to achieve any respectable position. He acquired some pupils, among them a countess who was a gifted singer and keyboardist. In a working day of 16 to 18 hours Haydn accepted various engagements: playing the first violin at daybreak in church, going from there to play the organ in the chapel of a Viennese count, later singing tenor at St. Stephen's, and finally passing a good part of the night at a clavier, played for his own delight to raise his spirits and quiet his worries. He also participated at times in the summer-night serenades that were a charming feature of Viennese life. It is possible, then, that he could play a wind instrument passably; an eighteenth-century Viennese almanac describes the serenades as being played by a trio or quartet of wind instruments.⁵

Haydn took advantage of a period of servitude as accompanist and valet to Nicola Porpora to pick up whatever he could from this irascible master of singing, composition, and Italian, and he was able to scrape enough money together for violin lessons. The violin became for him, in fact, a strong second instrument. An English singer appearing in a Mozart opera in Vienna in 1784 recalled that Haydn and Dittersdorf played first and second violins, Mozart viola, and Wanhal cello at a quartet party.⁶ Mozart frequently invited Haydn to participate in such events and on occasion the latter played viola.

His first string quartets were written in the 1750s for a group that gathered outside Vienna in the small castle of an ardent musician to whom Haydn was introduced. The enthusiasm of this agreeable circle stimulated his interest in composition for this medium.

With his capacity for concentration and hard work plus some social graces acquired in his association with nobles and aristocrats, to soften the rough edges of his peasant demeanor, Haydn

was well qualified for the first important position that was offered to him — that of music director and composer for the Bohemian Count Ferdinand Maximilian von Morzin. An orchestra of about 16 members was maintained by the count and countess the year around, playing in Vienna in winter and in their country house in summer.

Little is known of the two years or so of this association — no letters or notes exist from this period — but the ambience must have been agreeable. The Morzins were true lovers of music. The countess sang well, and one of Haydn's pleasant duties was to accompany her at the piano. (The piano would have been a square model; except for the pianos of Gottfried Silbermann — quite outside the mainstream of the development of the German piano and not to be considered in this connection — the grand piano did not make its first appearance in Germany until about 1773, the date of Johann Andreas Stein's earliest known grand.)

When the post of court musician to Prince Paul Esterházy was offered in 1761, there surely could have been no one better qualified musically or temperamentally than Haydn. He had acquired self-confidence as a composer, was totally familiar with all instruments, and had had ample experience in composing and performing on demand. He was in fact a real trouper and, moreover, had learned how to deal diplomatically and firmly with the whims and exigencies of royalty. As his notes indicate later, he was able to insist on what he considered proper or appropriate in matters of musical performance, personal freedom, and relations with the musicians under his direction. The contract outlined formidable musical duties and responsibilities and set forth detailed strictures on personal behavior for himself as well as other court musicians. It also stipulated that, "as the Vice-Capell master is proficient on various instruments, he shall take care himself to practice on all that he is acquainted with."⁷

When Haydn assumed his post the orchestra in Eisenstadt was

small, but scarcely more than a year later he was able to increase the number to comprise five violins, one cello, one double bass, one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, and two horns — all fine performers and some of them truly outstanding.

When Prince Paul Anton died in March of 1762 and was succeeded by Nicolas, a golden age of music in the Esterházy realm was inaugurated and was to flourish for nearly 30 years. Prince Nicholas's love of splendor and ostentation was balanced by a sincere devotion to music, a generous nature, and a kind heart. It is customary to lament the servile position of Haydn at the court, but it must be remembered that this was the order of the day expected and philosophically accepted by Haydn. In truth, no composer in history has had a more fortuitous opportunity to try out new ideas, to develop those that were workable and reject those that were not. It was a composer's dream: daily rehearsals always with the same musicians, endless performances in all musical media, close personal association with the performers, a sophisticated, critical, and appreciative audience, and ungrudging support of a patron who spared no expense to achieve the best of everything. Haydn said, "My prince was content with all my works. I received approval. I could, as head of an orchestra, make experiments, observe what enhanced an effect and what weakened it, thus improving, cutting away, and running risks. I was set apart from the world. There was nobody in my vicinity to confuse and annoy me in my course, so I had to be original."⁸ After the great castle of Eszterháza⁹ was completed in 1766, the quantity, quality, and variety of musical activities were unsurpassed during the 25 years of Prince Nicolas's life.

In view of the excellent biographies that are available, a recapitulation of the story of Haydn's life would be gratuitous here, except for aspects of it that provide background for a consideration of his use of instruments. The intention of the foregoing remarks is to stress those aspects.

Haydn's Use of Instruments

Keyboards

Without question keyboard instruments were dominant in Haydn's life. From his earliest musical experiences to the end of his days he was dependent on them in a variety of ways. In his early youth, isolated by his poverty, Haydn turned for solace to his clavichord, and many years later he spoke of the consolation his piano gave him in melancholy moments. If not a virtuoso keyboard performer he must indeed have been a competent and effective one, performing as soloist as well as accompanist, conducting his operas and symphonies from the keyboard — early a harpsichord, later a piano — and composing always at the keyboard, a practice not frowned upon in his time. His musical ideas and inspiration came always from improvisation at the keyboard. Near the end of his life he told Dies that musical ideas crowded into his head to the point of obsession, that his imagination played on him as though he were a keyboard and, continuing, he said, "I really am a living keyboard."¹⁰ In his later life he even took a lively interest in the development of piano-making.

The subject of Haydn's keyboard preferences is clouded by the word *clavier*. In the linguistic use of the time it usually meant clavichord in Germany, but it was used also in the generic sense to refer to any keyboard instrument.

Information is sketchy concerning the keyboard instruments at the court of Eszterháza in Haydn's time, but records survive that pertain to maintenance of instruments, e.g., regulating and quilling of harpsichords, voicing of organ pipes, and orders for tuning-hammers and strings. One of the court musicians received an increase in salary with the provision that he would be responsible for stringing, requilling, and tuning harpsichords, maintain-

ing the musical clocks, and supplying crow quills from his property. Most of the notations have to do with harpsichords but a clavichord is mentioned once. It is not clear when a piano appeared at the court, but a communication with the piano-maker Anton Walter in 1781 may have led to the purchase of one, and in 1796 he was commissioned to tune two pianos for the prince. No keyboard instruments from the court are known to have survived.¹¹

When Haydn turned decisively to the piano is a question as fascinating as the definitive answer to it is elusive. That it happened well before 1790 is certain. In this year, returning after a happy time in Vienna to Eszterháza, where by now he felt isolated and restless, he wrote to his dear friend Marianne von Genzinger that, “nothing could console me, my whole lodging was in disorder; my piano that I usually love in other times was moody and disobedient and provoked my displeasure more than it consoled me.”¹² There is no mention of his harpsichord or clavichord. In the same year he advised a friend to give away [!] his harpsichord and buy a piano, adding that he no longer played his harpsichord. He also lamented that Frau von Genzinger had no piano, saying that he could no longer compose harpsichord sonatas for her.¹³ In 1775 Burkat Shudi and John Broadwood sent him a harpsichord from England, an instrument that was already tolling its own death knell in that it was equipped with a machine stop and a Venetian swell for effects not characteristic of the Baroque — a type that, indeed, represents the transition from Baroque to Classicism and from harpsichord to piano.

Geiringer states unequivocally: “It must be emphasized here that the clavier used by Haydn was the same instrument that Mozart also employed for his keyboard compositions: the piano-forte.” He continues “. . . although some of the earliest of Haydn’s sonatas may also be played on the clavichord . . . and most of Haydn’s concertos on the more powerful harpsichord, Haydn’s main instrument was certainly the delicate *hammerklavier* of the

eighteenth century."¹⁴ Two of the clavier concertos, however, actually specify "cembalo" rather than "clavier," and all except one of 1784 in D major date from before ca. 1770. If some of the earlier ones were conceived for piano, it must have been the square model, expressive but limited in volume.



FIGURE 1.—Gouache painting of a typical eighteenth-century opera performance with the conductor and probably composer, formerly purported to be Haydn, at the harpsichord. The setting and the opera are presently unidentified. (Theatre Museum, Munich.)

Later studies by Horst Walter reconsider the subject. His article, "Haydn's Klaviere,"¹⁵ is the source of many of the observations made here. The harpsichord was in use throughout most of the century in instrumental ensemble groups and opera as a "lead" instrument from which the conductor worked, but for the earliest sonatas the clavichord must be considered along with the harpsichord. If there were no pianos at Eszterháza until at least 1781, it is doubtful that Haydn had the opportunity to become intimately familiar with one before that date. Dr. Landon is inclined to believe that Haydn was not particularly interested in the harpsichord except for those works in which it was a part of the orchestral texture.¹⁶

Such dynamic markings as are indicated before 1780 could apply to the harpsichord as well as to the clavichord or piano, e.g. *forte*, *piano*, — effects possible on a two-manual instrument. The first *crescendo* mark appears in the Artaria edition of the C minor Sonata in 1780, but as this passage is not preserved in the autograph, even this is possibly a later addition.¹⁷

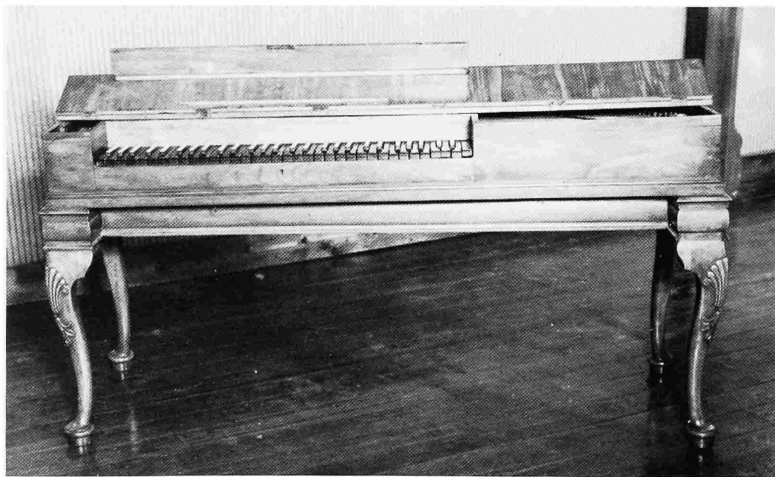


FIGURE 2.—Clavichord by Johann Bohak, Vienna, 1794. (Royal College of Music, London.) The only extant instrument definitely known to have belonged to Haydn. The stand is not original.



FIGURE 3.—Harpsichord by Shudi and Broadwood, London, 1775. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna.) Formerly believed to have belonged to Haydn, this is most likely similar or identical to the one he received from the Shudi and Broadwood firm in 1775. Most of their harpsichords, after 1766, that have survived are similarly equipped, i.e., 2' x 8', 1' x 4', lute, buff, machine, Venetian swell, 6 hand stops, 2 pedals. The keyboard compass is CC to f³.



FIGURE 4.—Square piano by Johann Schantz, late eighteenth century, Vienna, (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna.)

During the decade before, Johann Andreas Stein of Augsburg was not only perfecting his piano but was experimenting with instruments that combined the harpsichord and the piano. The transitional period was labored and the early pianos imperfect — uneven from one register to another — and difficult to control. Closely related in structure to the contemporary harpsichord, the new instrument was often equipped with devices for controlling the dynamics mechanically, while at the same time harpsichords were being provided with machine stops and “Venetian” and “nag’s head” swells.



FIGURE 5.—Grand piano by Johann Schantz, Vienna, ca. 1795. (Collection of R. R. Henshaw, Bath, England.) Johann Schantz worked with his brother Wenzel until the latter's death in 1791, when he took over the shop. None of Wenzel's pianos, so much admired by Haydn, has survived, but it is reasonable to assume that they were similar or identical to this.

Harpsichord is indicated (*Cembalo* or *Clavicembalo*) in Haydn's autographs of keyboard works up to 1770, e.g., *Concerto per il clavicembalo*, *Divertimento per il clavicembalo solo*, *Divertimento per il cembalo con 2 violini e Basso*, and *20 Variazioni per il cembalo*.

In general, clavier trios from 1784 specify on the title page "per il clavicembalo o forte piano" or "pour le clavecin ou piano-forte avec un violon et violoncello oblig." As late as 1800, however, Haydn indicated for his Trio No. 9 "per il cembalo col violino e violoncello."

In 1788 Haydn wrote to his publisher, Artaria, that he had bought himself “a new Fortepiano . . . in order to compose your three Clavier Sonatas [the piano trios nos. 11, 12, 13] especially well.” Artaria was requested to pay Wenzel Schantz “organ and instrument maker” for it. This piano is now lost — there is in fact no piano by this maker known to have survived — and there is no indication as to whether it was a grand or square model. The low price of 31 ducats suggests the latter, a *Tafelklavier*, but one would like to believe it a grand and to hope the maker offered it to the master at a special price. Walter assumes that it was the instrument Haydn possessed until near the end of his life, when he sold it for a good price.¹⁸ He described the Schantz pianos as having “a very light and facile quality and an agreeable touch.”¹⁹ It is worth mentioning that although he abandoned the harpsichord, the clavichord retained his affection. When Haydn finally left Eszterháza for Vienna he gave away his clavichord, saying he had composed most of *The Creation* on it.²⁰

In 1796 the harpsichord, by now almost obsolete, is indicated for some of the songs, but, further confusing the issue, Haydn refers later to his piano accompaniments for some of these same songs.

The nagging question of “which clavier?” is better understood, perhaps, when one recalls that Haydn was practical — and so were his publishers — and the designation of pianoforte on the title page of a composition would tend to discourage its purchase by one who had not yet been able to replace his harpsichord with the newer instrument. It is certain that after 1788 Haydn was composing primarily for the piano.

A consideration of the problem on stylistic grounds leads one to the conclusion that most of the keyboard works are intended for a dynamically touch-sensitive instrument, whether clavichord or piano, and that the trios and later sonatas are unquestionably for piano. But like the choice of instruments for *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, this is a subject for continuing discussion and de-

bate and one not likely to be settled to the complete satisfaction of anyone.

It must be admitted that many of the keyboard compositions do not “work” well when played on a modern piano in twentieth-century pianistic style. If an eighteenth-century German, Viennese, or English piano is not at hand, the performer must at least know their characters in order to realize the musical intent and beauty of Haydn’s keyboard music. The potentialities as well as the limitations of these instruments have to be taken into consideration for faithful re-creation of the music.

On his first visit to London, Haydn lived near the piano-manufacturing establishment of John Broadwood, son-in-law of the harpsichord maker Burkat Shudi. Broadwood was then, as now, the greatest name in English piano-making, and here Haydn was introduced to an English piano, quite different in construction, mechanism, tone, and touch from the German and Viennese instruments. When Haydn moved to Lisson Grove, the Bohemian composer and pianist Johann Ladislav Dussek generously lent him his own Broadwood. It was a five and one-half-octave²¹ instrument that Dussek had requested the Broadwoods to make instead of the five octaves²² of continental pianos, and it possessed pedals instead of the knee levers of Austrian pianos. Dussek himself used the pedals effectively and was among the first to write out pedal instructions in his music. Haydn’s directions “open pedal” in the first movement of the C major Sonata of 1794, although impractical to follow precisely, are made with the English pedal in mind and most likely were influenced by Dussek, whose “astounding” pedal effects were much admired.²³ But if Haydn availed himself of the pedal resources of the English piano, the additional half octave was virtually wasted on him. In only one keyboard work does he venture beyond the compass of his country’s instruments and then only as far as *a*³ — this in the slow movement of the C major Sonata previously mentioned. This was expedient, of course, since he expected his works to be



FIGURE 6.—Grand piano by John Broadwood and Son, London, 1794. (Smithsonian Institution.) This is the type of piano lent to Haydn in London for which his last three sonatas and some of his piano trios were composed. The right pedal lifts the dampers, the left shifts the action to cause the hammers to strike two of the three strings for each key, or still further to strike only one of the three.

played also on the continent (English pianos with a compass to a^8 were available in Berlin in 1792²⁴) but more than this, there is nowhere in his compositions any suggestion of frustration with either the tonal resources or the keyboard compass of the piano of his time. There are no stories of broken hammershanks or strings and no passages that seem to be conceived to continue beyond the five-octave limits as with Beethoven. Apparently, however, he did make use of the extra treble notes in improvisational passages.²⁵ It cannot be overemphasized that Haydn accepted the limitations while realizing superbly the capabilities of his instruments.

The English piano of the eighteenth century lacks the bell-like clarity of its German or Viennese contemporary but its fuller sound, enhanced by the damper pedal, is extremely effective. It is possible with the left pedal to shift the action so that the hammers strike two of the three strings for each note and, still further, to strike only one for each note to achieve interesting coloristic effects not attainable on the continental pianos. It can hardly be doubted that Haydn as well as Dussek took full advantage of these resources.

Several times Haydn strongly stated his preference for Schantz pianos over other Viennese instruments, but there is no mention of his favoring the Viennese over the English action, and he seems to have experienced no difficulty in adjusting to the heavier action and fuller tone of the latter. His execution of solo passages was described by a London musician and writer in 1792 as "indisputably neat and distinct . . . with accuracy and precision."²⁶

Geiringer²⁷ says that Haydn conducted from the harpsichord at the first Salomon concerts but Dr. Burney, music historian and critic, wrote that he presided at the pianoforte. Haydn's own words were "at the clavier,"²⁸ which is no help at all. Still, London newspapers depict him at the harpsichord and he is quoted in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* of May 1791 as saying, "I



FIGURE 7.—Upright grand piano by John Broadwood & Sons, London, ca. 1815. (Smithsonian Institution.)

(a) This is the style of piano that was brought out by William Stodart in London in 1795 and admired by Haydn. Several other makers, including the Broadwood firm, copied the idea.

(b) This view shows bookshelves installed in the space left by the bent side.



FIGURE 8.—Grand piano by Longman and Broderip, London, late eighteenth century. (Collection of Dr. H. C. Robbins Landon, Vienna.) Believed to have belonged to Haydn.

faithfully promised to play the harpsichord" and it was Dussek who was promoted as "pianoforte soloist." On the second London visit it was firmly stated, "Dr. Haydn will direct his compositions at the Pianoforte."²⁹ The weight of evidence points to the conclusion that in London, Haydn was more often at the piano, which, after all, he had come to prefer before 1790, but if a harpsichord was to be used he was not averse to it.

FIGURE 9.—Grand piano by Erard Frères, Paris, 1801. (Finchcocks collection, Richard Burnett, Goudhurst, Kent.) This must be a near if not identical twin of Haydn's Erard of the same date. The four pedals are: bassoon on the lower strings (a wooden bar to the underside of which a loose roll of paper is attached can be lowered by the pedal so that the paper touches the strings producing a buzzing sound when they are struck); damper; moderator (moves forward felt tabs graduated in thickness, through which the hammers strike); *due corda*. A knee lever is an *una corda* device.



Even with his busy schedule in London, Haydn found time to take an interest in the innovations of the piano-makers. He wrote to the musician and inventor Charles Clagget, who had a musical museum of sorts, to compliment him on his improvements in harpsichords and pianos.³⁰ He called on William Stodart and expressed interest and delight in the possibilities of his new design for a vertical piano, “an upright grand in the form of a book case.”³¹ In Vienna in 1795 Johann Jakob Könnicke built a “new” type of piano, evidently with an enharmonic keyboard, which was tried and praised by Haydn when it was introduced.³²

The inventory of Haydn’s estate listed a piano by Erard et Frères and one by Longman and Broderip dating from the 1790s — the precise year of its manufacture is uncertain. The latter may have been a gift from the firm, also a publishing house, with which Haydn had dealings. It is believed to have come into the hands of Abbé Stadler, who said he had often heard Haydn play on it. Dr. Landon thinks the one he now owns — the only Longman and Broderip piano ever to be found in Austria — may be Haydn’s although a portion of the necessary documentation is lacking.³³ The Erard of 1801, probably also a presentation from the makers, has disappeared but it is described as having a five and one-half-octave compass, the case of mahogany veneer with metal (ormolu) ornamentation. Recently discovered correspondence between Haydn and Erard reveals that Haydn understood very well the intricate mechanism of the piano.³⁴

Instrumentation of the Piano Trios

The instrumentation of the piano trios is a subject of peculiar interest. Even to the last one, Haydn calls them clavier sonatas with violin and cello obligato — and indeed they are. Some of his most beautiful musical ideas are set forth in the trios, but the three instruments are by no means equal partners — the piano is

totally dominant. While the writing for the violin is beautiful and often brilliant, Haydn seems to have one foot in the Baroque where the cello is concerned, for it is, for the most part, treated as a *continuo* instrument and is given only an occasional moment to rise above this subordinate role. This is not easy to understand, even recognizing that the piano trio was a new form. Certainly there was no lack of competent cellists, and the quartets and symphonies show that Haydn knew how to write effectively for the instrument as is further evident in the two cello concertos. The neglect of the trios, due to the unevenness of interest in the three parts, is regrettable.

Wind Instruments

One cannot accept Haydn's lament that he had only just learned how to use wind instruments when the time came for him to leave the world. His contemporaries, as do today's musicians, found his instrumentation remarkable in the way it brought out the special qualities of the individual instruments and in the independence he gave them. The horn concerto written when the composer was only 30 is not considered to be one of his great works, but no one has ever complained that it was not idiomatic for the solo instrument. In the trios for two flutes (or flute and violin) and cello, the unusual combination succeeds because of Haydn's sensitive feeling for the timbres and the balance of the instruments. The trumpet concerto in E flat of 1796, written for the court trumpeter Anton Weidinger and his experimental keyed trumpet, shows the composer successfully adapting to and taking full advantage of the resources of the new instrument that, unlike the natural trumpet, could play chromatically in all registers. Effective passages in the symphonies for wind instruments, solo or in various combinations, are so numerous that one need not belabor the point.



FIGURE 10.—Orchestral hand horn with crooks for key changes by unknown maker, ca. 1800. (Smithsonian Institution.)

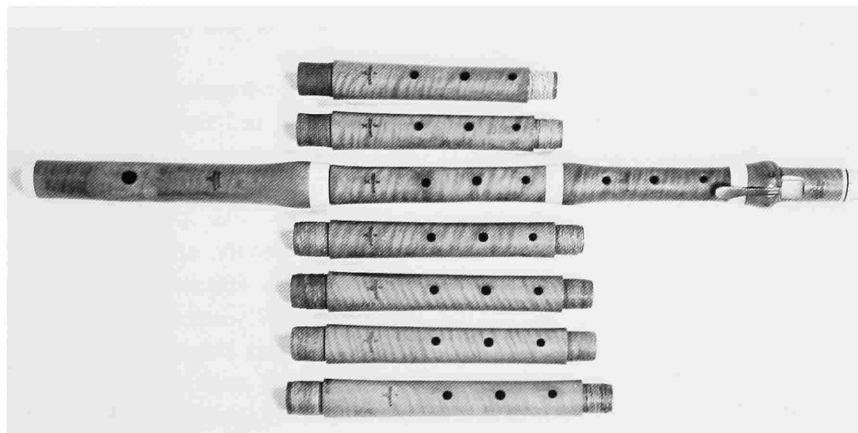


FIGURE 11.—Flute by Heinrich Grenser, Dresden, late eighteenth century, with one key and six extra tuning joints. (Smithsonian Institution.)

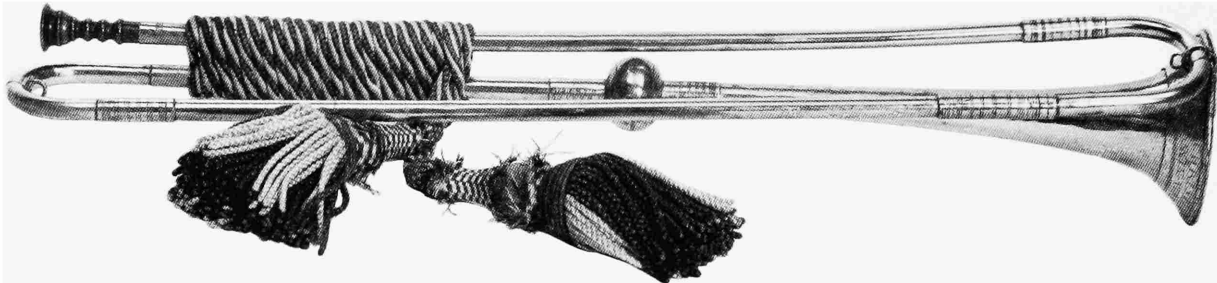


FIGURE 12.—Natural trumpet by Christian Wittman. Nuremberg, eighteenth century. (Smithsonian Institution.) Early experiments in adding valves to the trumpet were made in Haydn's time (see p. 22).

Not surprisingly, Haydn's use of clarinets was sparing until the second series of the London symphonies. The clarinet had not emerged as an accepted instrument of the orchestra until ca. 1750 and was introduced in Mannheim in 1758. It was not until 1764 that the first clarinet tutor was published.

Haydn used clarinets several times in works composed in or about 1761: in a *Divertimento* for two clarinets, and two horns; in another, now lost, for two clarinets, one bassoon (possibly two), and two horns; in the *Cassatio* for two clarinets, two horns, and strings.³⁵ Their next appearance is in the *Eight Notturmi* of 1790, composed for the King of Naples, and, finally, all of the last six of the London symphonies, except for No. 102 in B flat, include two clarinets in the scoring. More than 50 years after its composition, the *Missa Brevis* of 1749 or 1750 was rescored "at the order of the composer by Mr. Heidenrich,"³⁶ and two violins, organ, and bass were augmented by one flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two trumpets, and drums.



FIGURE 13.—Bassoon
by William Milhouse,
Newark, England, 1763-1788,
with four keys.
(Smithsonian Institution.)



FIGURE 14.—Oboe by William Milhouse,
London, late eighteenth century,
with two keys. (Smithsonian Institution.)



FIGURE 15.—Clarinet in E flat, Bartholomäus Lutz, Wolfhalden (Canton Appenzell, Switzerland), end of 18th century. (Rück collection in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum.) Nuremberg.

This clarinet, with 5 keys, is of the type in use in Haydn's time. The most common ones at that period, however, were in B, A, or sometimes C. The invention of the clarinet, an improvement of the *chalumeau* in the eighteenth century, is credited to Christian Denner and his son of Nuremberg. It was during Haydn's lifetime that it became an accepted member of the orchestra.

Timpani

Haydn was one of the first composers to score for the timpani in real notation. The signature for the timpani part in Symphony No. 103 in E flat major contains two flats. Mozart always wrote for timpani in C, the performer transposing (i.e., retuning) as required.³⁷

The Baryton

When one thinks of the fanciful instrument known as the baryton, Haydn immediately comes to mind. Prince Nicolas was devoted to the baryton and must have played it very well — his demand for music for it was insatiable. Haydn's own catalog listed 165 compositions that used it and there are, additionally, 12 short divertimenti for two barytons and bass. Most of these works are for baryton, viola, and cello. This large body of music, catering to the enthusiasm of a single patron for a particular instrument, is comparable only to the more than 550 harpsichord sonatas that Domenico Scarlatti composed for the queen of Spain.

The baryton is a complex instrument and difficult to play. It is completely obsolete now and Haydn's contemporaries were in disagreement as to whether its merits outweighed its disadvantages. Some hearers were moved to tears by its sound; others



FIGURE 16.—Timpani, Germany, eighteenth century.
(Smithsonian Institution.)

found it an ungrateful instrument with an embarrassment of strings. It is a relative of the bass *viola da gamba*, having six or seven bowed gut strings above an equal number of metallic strings strung close to the belly and passing underneath the neck. The metallic strings cannot be bowed but vibrate in sympathy with the bowed strings, and they can also be plucked by reaching the left hand behind the neck so that one, if dexterous enough, might play *col arco* and *pizzicato* simultaneously. Whatever the merits of the instrument, performers and composers were discouraged by the awkwardness of handling it and the difficulty of keeping all the strings tuned. Thinking to surprise the prince, Haydn started to learn in secret to play the baryton. The prince was less than pleased, however, and Haydn recognized that he was expected only to compose for, not to play, the baryton.

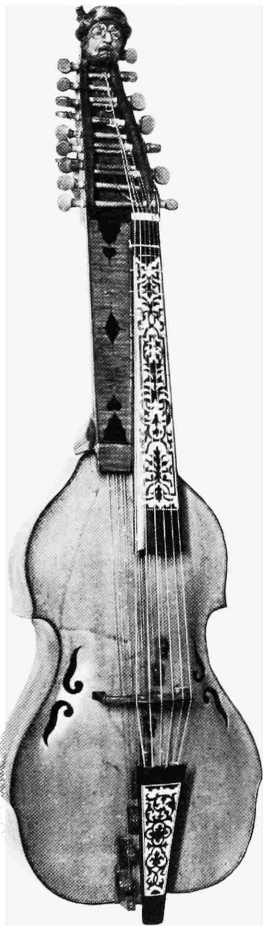


FIGURE 17.—Baryton by Daniel Achatius Stadlmann, Vienna, 1732. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna.) Formerly believed to have belonged to Haydn.

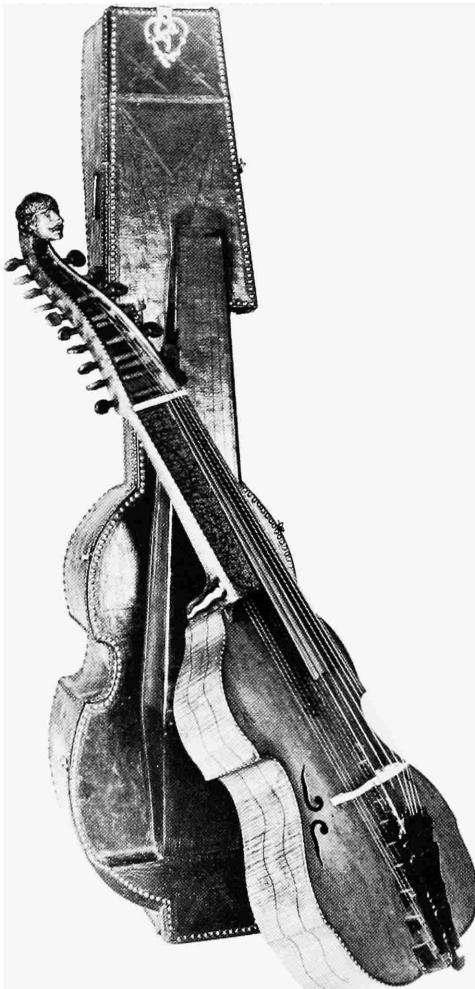


FIGURE 18.—Baryton by Joann Joseph Stadlmann, Vienna, shown with its case. (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest.) Formerly belonged to Prince Esterházy.

Haydn in London

When Haydn was invited to go to London he was 58, a venerable age in the thinking of the time, and his geographical world had been bounded by Vienna, Eisenstadt, and Eszterháza. His dream of visiting Italy, the home of opera, had never been realized. Except for his mother tongue the only language he knew was Italian. His friends were anxious for him — for the journey itself, a formidable one of 17 days or so plus the dreaded crossing of the channel, and for the unknown dangers that might await him in that tremendous sinful city. But when Mozart said with dismay, “Oh, Papa, you have had no education for the wide world, and you speak so few languages,” Haydn was undaunted and calmly replied, “But my language is understood all over the world.” And so it was, but more than that, his fame had preceded him far more than he could have imagined. His works had been published in Germany, France, Holland, and England, probably often without revenue to him. A Spanish poet had devoted a passage in one of his long poems to praise of Haydn’s music; from Spain, Boccherini had sent him messages of admiration; a musical society in Italy had accorded him recognition by electing him an honorary member; and for at least 10 years publishers had been vying with each other to bring out his works. But still he scarcely realized that he had in fact become an international celebrity and his welcome in England astounded and delighted him. His response to the challenges of the London visits is both touching and inspiring.

The London orchestra was larger and stronger than that of Eszterháza, and Haydn instantly grasped its greater potentialities. Even though he knew not a word of English when he arrived, rehearsals presented no problem since he was able to establish the kind of empathic rapport with the members of the orchestra that he had enjoyed at home. They appreciated his patience and courtesy, respected his knowledge and competence, and responded

instantaneously. The very first concert was electrifying and Dr. Burney described the enthusiasm of the audience as amounting almost to frenzy. The English took Haydn to their hearts without reservation. His symphonic creation ends in a dazzling burst of glory with the London symphonies, the radiant crown of his vast output for orchestra.

As a conductor he was scrupulous in his concern for details. His standard of elegance in his orchestral performances may be imagined from his instructions to a copyist to arrange the parts so that the players need not turn their pages all at once in order not to weaken a lightly scored passage.³⁸

Conclusion

In the study of Haydn's life one is repeatedly made aware of his intense love for instruments. Like a good parent with his children, he drew from the instruments the maximum of which they were capable and resisted testing them beyond their practical limits. There is no passage that is "unplayable" and each instrument speaks always idiomatically. His instrumental style expanded in relation to the facilities of the London orchestra, even as his keyboard style flowered in response to the development of the piano.

Mstislav Rostropovich tells a story of a horn player who, in a rehearsal of a work of Glazunov conducted by the composer, complained that a certain note in the score was impossible to take. Haydn's close affinity with instruments and with his players makes it unlikely that he ever had such an experience. The story continues, however, that Glazunov took the horn and, after a brief warm-up, was able to demonstrate that the note could indeed be played. One can be fairly certain that, if necessary, Haydn could have done the same, whatever instrument was in question.

Notes

(Full references in Sources Cited)

1. Geiringer, page 21.
2. Ibid, page 19.
3. Dies, A.C. *Biographische Nachrichten über Joseph Haydn*.
Vienna, 1810. Quoted in English translation by Geiringer, page 24.
4. Geiringer, page 32.
5. Ibid, pages 38, 39.
6. Michael Kelly, *Reminiscences* quoted by Hughes, page 56f.
7. Geiringer, page 53.
8. Somfai, page 41.
9. The modern official Hungarian spelling of the castle of the Esterházy family is Eszterháza.
10. Hughes, pages 105, 106.
11. Information on instruments at the court, Walter, pages 257, 258.
12. Haydn letter 9 February 1790.
13. Letter of 7 June 1790.
14. Geiringer, page 191.
15. *Haydn Studien*, volume II, number IV.
16. Conversation with H. C. Robbins Landon.
17. Landon, Christa, preface, page xv.
18. Walter, page 275.
19. Letter to Marianne von Genzinger, 20 June 1790.
20. Walter, page 268.
21. FF to c⁴.
22. FF to f³.
23. Walter, page 269.
24. Ibid, page 269.
25. Ibid, page 272.
26. Ibid, page 272.
27. Geiringer, page 99.
28. Walter, page 271.
29. Ibid, page 272.
30. Ibid, page 271.

31. Harding, page 60.
32. Walter, page 271.
33. Conversation with Dr. H. C. Robbins Landon.
34. To be published in Dr. Landon's forthcoming biography of Haydn.
35. Dr. Landon supplied this information. The following is quoted from his letter:

Divertimento II:14 for two clarinets and two horns (autograph: Lenin-grad, U.S.S.R., dated 1761; new edition (H.C.R. Landon) Doblinger, Diletto Musicale series) ; in the lost Divertimento II:5 for two clarinets, one (two?) bassoon (s) and two horns, the instrumentation listed by Haydn himself in his Entwurf Katalog; and in the Cassatio II:17 for two clarinets, two horns and strings (earliest mss: Prague, Monastery of Seitenstetten, Monastery of St. Paul, Monastery of Schlägl).
36. *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, fifth edition, volume IV, page 167.
37. According to Dr. Landon.
38. In the Cantata "Applausus"; Hughes, page 42, footnote 1.

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