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«...UND SO MUSSTE ICH ORIGINAL WERDEN.»
HOW ORIGINAL WAS HAYDN
IN HIS SYMPHONIES?

ABSTRACT - The essay seeks to establish a context for Haydn's symphonies composed in the period c. 1760-1780. Three symphonies by Austrian composers of the time, Hofmann, Pichl and Vanhal, are examined in order to explore Haydn's indebtedness to his contemporaries and to define his originality.

KEY WORDS - Haydn, Symphony, Vanhal, Pichl, Hofmann.

RIASSUNTO - Questo saggio cerca definire il contesto nel quale sono state composte le sinfonie di Haydn del periodo tra il 1760 e il 1780.

A tale scopo vengono qui esaminate tre sinfonie, composte da autori austriaci di quel tempo, Hofmann, Pichl e Vanhal, per stabilire quali siano state le influenze subite da Haydn nei riguardi dei suoi contemporanei e quale, invece, sia stata la sua originalità.

PAROLE CHIAVE - Haydn, Sinfonia, Vanhal, Pichl, Hofmann.

«...and so I had to become original». These are Haydn's own words as quoted by Griesinger in his biography of the composer which appeared in 1810. They form part of a general picture of Haydn's working conditions as Kapellmeister at the Esterházy court: «*My Prince was happy 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 it, adding to, cutting away, and incurring risks. I was set apart from the world, there was nobody in the vicinity to confuse me in my course and so I had to become original.*»⁽¹⁾

Although these words have sometimes been applied specifically to the many lonely months that Haydn spent at the summer palace of Eszterháza, it is clear from their context in Griesinger's biography that

(1) GEORG AUGUST GRIESINGER, *Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn*, (Leipzig 1810), pp. 24-25.

they apply more generally to the period 1761-90, that is from the time Haydn first entered the Esterházy court as Vice Kapellmeister, to the death of Prince Nicolaus in September 1790 and Haydn's subsequent journey to London. With their emphasis on the orchestra (he calls himself the «head of an orchestra») Haydn's remarks can legitimately be directed at the composer's symphonies; the surrounding paragraphs in Griesinger's biography deal with opera and oratorio.

Modern authors have been happy to quote and requote these evocative remarks by Haydn; on a biographical level they give direct evidence of an isolated, but happy Kapellmeister and a supportive patron, while on the musical level they encourage the view of Haydn as a persistently inventive and curious composer. The picture created is that of a laboratory for the development of the symphony with Haydn as the pioneering scientist. When one comes to look at the products of this laboratory - the 80 or more symphonies that Haydn composed for, or at the Esterházy court - this sense of continual experiment, effort and determination is borne out. There are symphonies in three movements, in four movements, in four movements with an opening slow movement, even in six movements, some have slow introductions, other open with complete slow movements, there are symphonies with a programmatic content, symphonies with extensive passages for solo instruments, symphonies that feature contrapuntual writing and so on. As many commentators have pointed out, only in the 1780s does the four-movement pattern fast, slow, minuet and fast with optional slow introduction emerge as a preference in Haydn's output; in the 1760s and 1770s, on the other hand, there is a greater variety of approach, both in the number and type of movement. In this earlier period of service at the Esterházy court one cannot speak of a typical Haydn symphony in the sense that one can in the case of the «Paris» or «London» symphonies.

This variety and range of inspiration in Haydn's symphonies composed in the first couple of decades at the Esterházy court is even more striking when one compares his output with that of the other great symphonist of the second half of the eighteenth century, Mozart, and, of course, with the broad symphonic tradition that followed, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms etc. All in all, it constitutes a neat historical picture: Haydn's manifold experiments led to the discovery of the symphony as we know it. But in the same way that biographers have sometimes exaggerated Haydn's isolation in the 1760s and 1770s perhaps historians of the symphony have been too ready to accept at

face value Haydn's self-proclaimed originality. How original was he in his symphonies?

Until comparatively recently it was impossible even to begin to answer this question. Haydn's own symphonies were not available in a modern edition until the mid 1960s; and the number of symphonies by his Austrian contemporaries easily available was minimal. However, by the 1950s and 1960s one important general principle had been securely established. The immediate stylistic background for Haydn's symphonies was an Austrian one, the music of Monn (1717-50), Wagenseil (1715-77), Gaßmann (1729-74), Dittersdorf (1739-99), Hofmann (1738-93), Albrechtsberger (1736-1809), Pichl (1741-1805), Michael Haydn (1737-1806), Vanhal (1739-1813), Ordonez (1734-86) and others and not, say, symphonies from other parts of Europe, such as Mannheim, which are poorly represented in Austrian libraries. Since the 1960s many more symphonies by these Austrian contemporaries of Haydn have become available, especially through the continuing *Denkmäler* volumes, the *Diletto Musicale* series (published by Doblinger in Munich and Vienna) and, most numerous and valuable, the volumes in the Garland Press series called *The Symphony 1720-1840*.⁽²⁾

It is now possible to view Haydn's symphonies in some kind of context. Some people might say that it is still premature to draw any firm conclusions about the development of the symphony in Austria in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. After all, there are still many symphonies by Joseph Haydn himself that cannot be dated accurately and the dates for the vast majority of those by his contemporaries are very imprecise, typically a *terminus ante quem* provided by a contemporary catalogue. Secondly, the number of symphonies by minor composers available for study remains statistically small. For the present paper I have looked at some 150 symphonies by 15 composers; a conservative estimate of the number of symphonies by contemporaries of Haydn working in the Austrian lands would be a couple of thousand. Despite these reservations I think we can at least begin to answer the question «how original was he»?

Any systematic appraisal of this question might well start with trying to establish which composers and symphonies were known to Haydn. Unfortunately, the extant evidence is rather limited. Neither the Griesinger biography of Haydn nor the one by Dies mentions a single

(2) BARRY S. BROOK (General Editor), *The Symphony 1720-1840. A comprehensive collection of full scores in sixty volumes*, (New York and London: Garland, 1979-1986).

symphony by a composer other than Joseph Haydn. From the contract that Haydn signed when he joined the Esterházy court in 1761 it is clear that academies formed a regular part of musical life, but we are ill-informed about what was played at these concerts. A surviving *Spielplan* from 1778 is devoted almost exclusively to opera and plays but gives information on two academies: on 30 January a symphony by Vanhal was played as well as music by Tomasini and Bianchi; and on 11 February a symphony by Haydn was played alongside music by Rosetti and Pichl. ⁽³⁾ Catalogues prepared at the court during Haydn's lifetime suggest that the Esterházy library was one that was constantly being updated. A catalogue largely compiled in 1759, but containing some entries as late as 1761, includes symphonies by Dittersdorf (10), Ordonez (1) and Joseph Haydn (1). ⁽⁴⁾ Nearly fifty years later, c1805, a catalogue prepared by Hummel lists dozens of symphonies, including works by Dittersdorf, Ordonez, Pichl, Vanhal and others. ⁽⁵⁾ In addition, the Esterházy archives in Budapest contain a number of symphonies by Haydn's contemporaries, for instance Vanhal and Michael Haydn, that are not listed in these contemporary catalogues; perhaps many more once existed, some being destroyed in the 1779 fire that affected the palace at Eszterháza. As well as the library resources of the Esterházy court, Haydn would no doubt have become acquainted with new symphonies during his visits to Vienna. In sum, whereas it is difficult to be precise about Haydn's knowledge of other composer's symphonies in the 1760s and 1770s, the evidence suggests that he was, at the very least, aware of the output of his contemporaries. He may have been composing in seclusion but he was not composing in a vacuum.

The following survey takes three symphonies, one each by Leopold Hofmann, Wenzel Pichl and Johann Baptist Vanhal, using them to make more general points about the development of the symphony in the 1760s and 1770s. I am not here concerned with the early development of the symphony in Austria - Monn and Wagenseil will hardly be mentioned - rather with its development in the period largely covered by the Griesinger quote.

⁽³⁾ H. C. ROBBINS LANDON, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works. Haydn at Eszterháza 1766-1790*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 94.

⁽⁴⁾ See JANOS HARICH, *Inventare der Esterházy-Hofmusikkapelle in Eisenstadt, Haydn Yearbook IX* (1975), pp. 74-75.

⁽⁵⁾ *Inventarium der Hoch Fürstlich Kammer & Theater Music 1806*. Facsimile and transcription in *Haydn Yearbook XI* (1980), pp. 5-182.

First the Hofmann. Leopold Hofmann was born in Vienna in 1738 and died there in 1793. He held various church positions throughout his adult life and from 1769 was employed at the Royal and Imperial court too. Most of his 67 symphonies were composed in a period of about a dozen years, between the late 1750s and the late 1760s, and there is ample testimony that they were well regarded not only in Austria but in other European countries too. A typical work is a symphony in E flat (Eb1 in the catalogue in the Garland series, *The Symphony*); it appears in the Göttsweig catalogue in 1761, the earliest *terminus ante quem*. The symphony is scored for an orchestra of two oboes, two horns and strings, what may be legitimately called the standard Austrian orchestra for symphonies of the time. It has four movements in the order slow, fast, minuet and fast. A total of five symphonies by Hofmann have this format, symphonies that are contemporary with Haydn's own use of the pattern; in one or two cases they may even predate them. Haydn's four-movement symphonies in this format are Nos. 5, 11, 21, 22, 34 and 49, the last, *La Passione*, dating from 1764. Indeed, the pattern seems to have been reasonably common in the Austrian symphony in the years around 1760; Ordóñez, for instance, uses it in five symphonies (Garland C1, Eb3, E1, F8, F9) before abandoning it in favour of three- and four-movement patterns that begin with a fast movement.

The opening of Hofmann's symphony is particularly reminiscent of Haydn's Symphony No. 11 with its thematic line in second violins over a mainly quaver support, later answered in imitation at the fifth by the first violins; Example 1a shows the Hofmann, Example 1b the Haydn. This opening procedure, a legacy of the instrumental music of the Baroque most familiar to us from the trio sonata, is found in three other symphonies by Haydn: Nos. 16, 18 and 25, all works composed in the 1760s. Hofmann's Adagio movement is followed by an Allegro molto, a faster tempo than Hofmann normally chooses when a fast movement appears first in the cycle; this desire to maximise the contrast between the first two movements is also found in Haydn's symphonies that open with a slow movement; Nos. 21 and 22 both follow an opening adagio with a presto movement. The Allegro molto of Hofmann's symphony is a regular sonata form, but, as is often found in Austrian symphonies of the period, the second subject does reveal a thematic connection with the first subject, in this case the rising arpeggio figure in the bass (see Example 2). In the first subject this arpeggio figure had complemented the opening martial motif; in the second subject the motif is the source of the dialogue between treble and bass instruments. Compare the first and second subjects of Haydn's fast movement in

Example 1 - a) Hofmann: Symphony in Eb (Garland Eb1) (Göttweig catalogue 1761), movement I

Adagio

2 Oboes
2 Horns in E^b
Violin I
con sordini
Violin II
con sordini
Viola
con sordini
Bass

3
5

b) Haydn: Symphony No. 11 (-1769 [-?1760]), movement I

Adagio cantabile

2 Corni in Es/Mi^b
Violino I
Violino II
Viola
Violoncello
e Basso

6

Example 2 - Hofmann: Symphony in Eb (Garland Eb1), movement II

Allegro molto

2 Oboes
2 Horns in E^b
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Bass

1st subject

'X'

5

2nd subject

'X'

40

'X'

'X'

Example 3 - Haydn: Symphony No. 11, movement II

1st subject

Allegro

2 Oboi

2 Corni in Es/Mi^b

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello,
Basso e Fagotto

2nd subject

41

Example 4 - a) Hofmann: Symphony in Eb (Garland Eb1), movement III

35

2 oboes

2 horns

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Bass

f *p*

Menuet da capo

b) Haydn: Symphony No. 22 («Philosopher») (1764), movement III

33 *Trio*

2 oboes *Soli*

2 horns in E^b *Soli*

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Bass

p

Example 5 - a) Hofmann: Symphony in Eb (Garland Eb1), movement IV

Presto

2 Oboes

2 Horns in Eb

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Bass

b) Haydn: Symphony No. 19 (-1766), movement III

Presto

2 Oboi

2 Corni in D/Re

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello,
Basso e Fagotto

Symphony No. 11 (Example 3) where, like the Hofmann, a common motif is presented in two different textures, homophonically in the first subject and in two-part counterpoint in the second subject. The third movement in Hofmann's symphony in E flat is a minuet and trio, the minuet fully scored and the trio featuring pairs of oboes and horns in a solo texture; the horn parts are especially daring, reaching a written top C near the end of the trio section (see Example 4a).

Wind band scoring in trio section of minuets is commonplace in Austrian symphonies and the fact that the trio of Haydn's Symphony No. 22 (quoted in Example 4b) is especially reminiscent of this Hofmann trio, including the high horn writing, should be seen against this pervasive background. The finale of the Hofmann symphony is another common type: a presto 3/8 movement in sonata form that makes repeated use of the rhythm $\text{J.} | \text{.} \text{.} \text{.} | \text{J.} \text{.} \text{.} | \text{J.} \text{.} \text{.} |$ (Example 5a). From Wagenseil's symphonies in the 1740s and 1750s through to the 1770s such movements are frequently encountered in Austrian symphonies; in Haydn's case they disappear in the mid 1760s. Example 5b quotes the finale of Symphony No. 19 as an example.

It should be clear from my remarks on these two symphonies that I am not claiming any primacy for this Hofmann symphony in Eb. In no sense was it a model for any symphony by Haydn and certainly not for the most famous of the works with opening slow movement, *The Philosopher*. Rather it draws, in the same way as the Haydn does, on the common currency of the time.

* * *

My second symphony is a work by Wenzel Pichl. Pichl was born in Bohemia in 1741. He studied in Prague and in 1765, at the age of 24, he became assistant to Dittersdorf in the Kapelle of Bishop Patachich in Großwardein. Between 1769 and 1771 he was again in Prague before moving to Vienna for four years. In 1775 he went to Milan to become music director to Archduke Ferdinand. Of particular interest is that at some point during the 1770s Pichl established contact with the Esterházy court, composing baryton music for Prince Nicolaus and sending other music to the court. ⁽⁶⁾ On 11 February 1778, according to the Esterházy *Spielplan* mentioned earlier, a divertimento by Pichl was performed at the court. Pichl remained in Italy until 1796 when he

⁽⁶⁾ H. C. ROBBINS LANDON, *op. cit.*, p. 39, 46 and 435.

returned to Vienna. He died there on 23 January 1805 while playing in a concert at the Lobkowitz palace.

The Garland volume (B/VII) devoted to the composer lists 36 symphonies, beginning in 1764 and going through to 1803; about two thirds of these symphonies were composed by about 1770, that is in Großwardein, Prague or Vienna. A Symphony in D major from 1769-70 carries the apparently authentic title *Il Marte (Mars)*, the Roman god of war and agriculture. It is in fact one of 16 symphonies by Pichl with descriptive titles. As well as Mars, six other mythological gods give their names to symphonies: Uranus, Flora, Pallas, Apollo, Saturn and Diana. There are further symphonies with names of seven of the eight Ancient Muses attached: Calliope (epic poetry), Clio (history), Polyhymnia (music), Euterpe (lyric poetry), Terpsichore (verse and dance), Melpomene (tragedy) and Thalia (comedy). Therefore, approximately one third of Pichl's symphonic output has some extra-musical association. Unfortunately, the extent of the extra-musical stimulus cannot be determined, since none of these symphonies seems to carry a detailed programme and none of the constituent movements has a descriptive title; it is possible that the titles are just that, fanciful titles, with no consequences on the music itself. Nevertheless, this substantial body of music is a useful reminder that works such as Joseph Haydn's trilogy of symphonies, *Le matin, Le midi, Le soir*, the *Farewell* symphony and others would not have been regarded as unusual in having a title or a programme, whether incidental or pervasive. Haydn himself told Griesinger that he had often portrayed moral characteristics in his symphonies, citing in particular one symphony in which «*God speaks to an unrepentant sinner, and pleads with him to reform; but the sinner in his foolishness pays no heed to the exhortations*». (7) Haydn did not identify the symphony and it is still a matter of speculation. More broadly, it has recently been suggested by two American scholars, Elaine Sisman and James Webster, that many more symphonies by Haydn in the 1760s and 1770s had programmatic associations. (8)

This willingness to be stimulated by an extra-musical idea seems to have been one of the features that distinguished the symphony in Austria from elsewhere in Europe; composers resident in Italy, Mannheim,

(7) GEORG AUGUST GRIESINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

(8) ELAINE R. SISMAN, *Haydn's Theater Symphonies*, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 43 (1990), pp. 292-352. JAMES WEBSTER, *Haydn's «Farewell» Symphony. Through-Composition and Cyclic Integration in his Instrumental Music*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).

London, Paris and North Germany seem to have had little or no interest in the programme symphony. In Austria as well as Pichl and Haydn, the following composers wrote programme symphonies: Dittersdorf, a *Sinfonia nazionale nel di cinque nazioni* (by 1776), a symphony entitled *Il Combattimento delle passioni umani* (by 1771), *Il ridotto* (after 1773) and in the 1780s the well known *Ovid* symphonies; Vanhal, a *Sinfonia comista* (by 1766) and a Symphony in E flat in which the last movement is headed *La tempesta* (before 1774); and Druschetsky, a *Sinfonia turca* in the mid 1770s followed over the next decade by several battle symphonies. In addition, there are several examples of works with the more general title *pastoral symphony*, probably engendered by the circumstances in which they were first performed, in church, rather than a specific programme. This repertoire of programme works going back to the middle of the eighteenth century certainly affects our perception of Haydn's programme symphonies, but forms an important background too to Beethoven's symphonies, most obviously his *Pastoral* and *Battle* symphonies.

To return to *Il marte* by Pichl. It begins with an impressive slow introduction. Slow introductions are common in Pichl symphonies; from 1769 onwards 12 out of his 25 symphonies, nearly half of his output, have the feature. During the 1760s the notion of a slow introduction had become common in the symphonies of many Austrian composers. Jan LaRue was the first to point out that the symphonies of Leopold Hofmann regularly feature slow introductions from the late 1750s onwards.⁽⁹⁾ It is found too in the symphonies of Ordonez and, especially, Gaßmann. If we turn to Joseph Haydn's symphonies from the period we notice a certain reluctance to explore the feature. The first symphony to use a slow introduction may be No. 25, but this work is difficult to date accurately; it could have been composed as early as 1760, it is certainly no later than 1766. Two symphonies from 1763, *Le matin* and *Le midi*, have introductions but after that there are no examples until No. 53, from c. 1775. Therefore up to the early 1770s only three symphonies out of over 50 by Haydn have a slow introduction. In this area of symphony design Haydn seems to have been conservative, content to reflect what was already common practice in the music of his contemporaries, rather than being in the forefront of development.

Pichl's symphony, *Il marte*, has four movements, the third of which

⁽⁹⁾ *Symphonie, Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 12 (1965), col. 1812.

is a minuet. The most notable aspects of this movement is that it is a canon between first violins and the remainder of the orchestra.

This canon might not strike us as being a particularly skilful example - the melody is rather gauche and the harmonic rhythm is clumsily controlled throughout - nevertheless, it was a favourite resource of the composer. Two other symphonies, *Pallas* and *Polybymnia* have minuets in canon and *Clio*, a symphony in E major, has a slow movement headed *Andante in canone*. Haydn's own experiments with canonic technique in minuets begin in Symphony No. 3 (no later than 1762), and continue in Symphony No. 23 (1764), the *Trauer* symphony (no later than 1772) and Symphony No. 47 (1772). In Haydn's case this was part of a more general interest in contrapuntal textures in the symphony in the 1760s ranging from movements, always finales, that have a fugal texture throughout (Symphonies Nos. 3 and 40) to paragraphs of imitative writing in a context that is homophonic. These two extremes, what might be termed formal and incidental counterpoint, are to be found in the symphonies of Haydn's contemporaries too, if not to the same pervasive degree. Several symphonies by Ordenez from the 1750s and 1760s reveal the same interest as do, not surprisingly, the symphonies of Albrechtsberger, all composed between 1765 and 1772. Significantly fewer instances are found in the symphonic output of Dittersdorf and Vanhal.

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Vanhal has long been recognized as one of the leading composers of symphonies in Austria in the second half of the eighteenth century. He composed 76 symphonies over a period of about 15 years from c. 1766 to c. 1781. They were well known throughout Europe; in London, for instance, the enormous popularity of Haydn's symphonies in the 1780s was preceded by a similarly intense vogue for the symphonies of Vanhal. Although a good deal of work has been done on Vanhal, the circumstances surrounding the composition of the symphonies remain largely unknown. While he did not have a regular court or church position like Hofmann, Pichl and Haydn he was patronized by a member of the Erdödy family for whom, perhaps, many of the symphonies were composed.

In this century Wyzewa and Saint-Foix were the first to draw attention to a particular aspect of Vanhal's creativity, when they coupled a symphony in D minor by Vanhal with Mozart's G minor symphony (K. 183) and minor key symphonies by Haydn, such as No. 44 (*Trauer*),

No. 45 (*Farewell*) and No. 49 (*La Passione*).⁽¹⁰⁾ The authors saw this as evidence of proto-romanticism, an equivalent to the *Sturm und Drang* movement of German literature. Vanhal's importance as a composer of such symphonies was further investigated in 1956 in a paper by Robbins Landon that compared symphonies in G minor by Vanhal, Haydn and Mozart, all composed around the same time, c. 1770.⁽¹¹⁾ Although the term *Sturm und Drang* is now common parlance in music history, many people have attacked its use. Two main objections are raised: first that any *Sturm und Drang* movement in music would seem to predate the one in German literature, secondly that in Haydn's music it encourages too much attention on minor key works at the expense of music in the major key, such as Symphony No. 48 (*Maria Theresia*) and No. 46 in B major. These are valid objections. Nevertheless, it remains true that within a period of eight to ten years Haydn composed seven symphonies in the minor key - these are listed in Example 6 - and that it represents a distinct aspect of Haydn's creativity c. 1770. If we turn to Vanhal's output of symphonies we find a similar concentration of minor key symphonies around this period; thirteen works in the minor key representing 17.10% of his total output. If we then compare these statistics for Vanhal and Haydn with similar statistics for other Austrian composers of symphonies we find some intriguing results. Some composers, such as Albrechtsberger, Dussek, Hofmann and Pichl wrote no symphonies in the minor key; Michael Haydn and Gaßmann wrote only one and two works respectively; Dittersdorf composed a few more, but they form a small part of his total output (4.31%) and are spread across a period of twenty years; Ordonez, finally, composed six minor key symphonies amounting to some 8.33% of his output, close to the Haydn statistic, but again the works were composed across a period of some twenty years, perhaps more. Vanhal clearly stands apart, in the number of minor key works, the high proportion they form in his output and the fact that they are clustered around 1770.

Given this, admittedly, very raw evidence it is difficult to sustain the view that a collective malaise affected all composers of symphonies in Austria c. 1770. At best we can say that two composers, Vanhal and

⁽¹⁰⁾ THEODORE DE WYZEWA & GEORGES DE SAINT-FOIX, *Wolfgang Amédée Mozart. Sa vie musicale et son oeuvre*, 3rd ed., (De Brouwer et Cie, 1936), vol. II, pp. 120-123.

⁽¹¹⁾ H. C. ROBBINS LANDON, *La Crise Romantique dans la musique autrichienne vers 1770: Quelques précurseurs inconnus de la Symphonie en sol mineur (KV183) de Mozart*, in: A. Verchaly (ed.), *Les influences étrangères dans l'oeuvre de W. A. Mozart*, (Paris 1958), pp. 27-47.

Example 6 - Symphonies in the minor key from c. 1760 to c. 1780

Joseph Haydn

No. 26, d (by 1770)
 No. 34, d (by 1767)
 No. 39, g (?1765)
 No. 44, e (by 1772)
 No. 45, f#(1772)
 No. 49, f (1768)
 No. 52, c (by 1774)
 No. 78, c (?1782)
 No. 80, d (-8 Nov 1784)
 Total: 9 = 11.25% (of 80 symphonies)

Albrechtstberger: 0 (of 8 symphonies)

Dussek: 0 (of 38 symphonies)

Hofmann: 0 (of 67 symphonies)

Pichl: 0 (of 36 symphonies)

Michael Haydn

d (Perger 20, 1784)
 Total: 1 = 2.44% (of 41 symphonies)

Dittersdorf

a1 (c. 1782-1785)
 a2 (c. 1773-1779)
 d1 (c. 1773-1779)
 e1 (by 1766, ?c. 1763)
 g1 (by 1768)
 Total: 5 = 4.31% (of 116 symphonies)

Vanhal

Cm1 (?)
 Cm2 (by 1770)
 Cm3 (?)
 Dm1 (by 1771)
 Dm2 (by 1778)
 Em1 (by 1770)
 Em2 (by 1775)
 Em3 (by 1773)
 Fm1 (by 1776)
 Gm1 (by 1771)
 Gm2 (c. 1765-66?)
 Am1 (by 1778)
 Am2 (by 1772)
 Total: 13 = 17.10% (of 76 symphonies)

Gaßmann

c (23) (1765)
 b (83) (1769)
 Total: 2 = 6.25% (of 32 symphonies)

Ordenez

B1 (after 1775)
 G6 (before 1766)
 G7 (after 1775)
 G8 (before 1775, ?c. 1763)
 C14 (c. 1775)
 F12 (c. 1758)
 Total: 6 = 8.33% (of 72 symphonies)

For Joseph Haydn 80 symphonies approximates number of works composed in c. 1760-c. 1780; for other composers number of symphonies equals total output, composed or, in the case of Pichl and Michael Haydn, substantially composed in the period c. 1760-c. 1780.

Statistics are drawn from the following sources. Haydn: GEORG FEDER, Worklist in: *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Vanhal: PAUL BRYAN Thematic Catalogue in: *The Symphony 1720-1840* (Garland), B/X. Albrechtstberger: ROBERT N. FREEMAN, Thematic Catalogue in: *ibid*, B/VII. Dussek: VLADIMÍR ALTNER, Thematic Catalogue in: *ibid*, B/XII. Hofmann: COOK KIMBALL, Thematic Catalogue in: *ibid*, B/VII. Pichl: ANITA ZAKIN, Thematic Catalogue in: *ibid*, B/VII. Michael Haydn: CHARLES SHERMAN, Thematic Catalogue in: *ibid*, B/VIII. Gaßmann: GEORGE HILL, Thematic Catalogue in: *ibid*, B/1. Dittersdorf: EVA BADURA-SKODA, Thematic Catalogue in: *ibid*, B/I. Ordenez: A. PETER BROWN, Thematic Catalogue in: *ibid*, B/IV plus the author's «The Symphonies of Carlo d'Ordenez...»; *Haydn Yearbook* XII (1981), pp. 5-121.

Haydn, were preoccupied at that time with exploring the sonority of the minor key in the symphony.

If we cannot speak of a *Sturm und Drang* period in the development of the Austrian symphony, I think it is possible to draw attention to a common musical idiom to which the suggestive title *Sturm und Drang* might be applied. Here, for instance, are the concluding pages of probably the earliest symphony in the minor key by Vanhal, G minor 2 from c. 1765-66.

These characteristics of minor key, syncopation, nervously repeated quavers and thematic material based on arpeggio motion can be found in many symphonic movements by other Austrian composers; here is a brief reminder from Haydn symphonies, from the finale of his Symphony No. 39, a work that is perhaps exactly contemporary with Vanhal's symphony. For movements such as these *Sturm und Drang* remains a useful shorthand description. But many other movements in the minor key from Austrian symphonies do not have this overt theatricality. The first movement of the same G minor symphony by Vanhal is much more individual. This music is certainly strange and rather unnerving, but *Sturm und Drang* hardly seems appropriate. As in Haydn's case, the automatic use of the term detracts from the individuality of expression that is found in Vanhal's music.

The second movement of Vanhal's G minor symphony affords a complete contrast to the outer movements, an extended oboe solo over a steady accompaniment pattern. Many symphonies by Vanhal have concertante parts for selected instruments in their slow movements, for violin, viola, cello, flute, oboe and bassoon. It is a common resource in slow movements by many Austrian composers, including Ordonez, Michael Haydn and Hofmann; unusual tone colours are often encountered, such as the viola in slow movements by Ordonez (Garland D9 and Bb6) and Vanhal (Garland Gm1) and, in the case of one Hofmann symphony (Garland D1), two trombones. Clearly, the many slow movements in Haydn's symphonies from the 1760s and 1770s that have solo passages - for instance, oboe and horns in No. 51, nearly everybody in No. 31 - are part of the same tradition. But, it is notable that Haydn does not compose any extended solos for the viola; there are a couple of brief passages in thirds and sixths with the cello in the trio sections of Symphonies Nos. 6 and 15, but nothing to compare with the demands he makes on other instruments.

The foregoing survey covers some of the main characteristics of the Austrian symphony in the period 1760-1780. It is no way comprehensive. Had I chosen three other symphonies, different aspects of symphony composition would have presented themselves for consideration: for instance, three-movements versus four-movement structures, rondo finales, thematic material based on folksongs and church melodies and the tradition of C major symphonies with trumpets and timpani. But I think the general picture of Haydn's position in the development of the symphony in Austria in the 1760s and 1770s is a clear one and unlikely to be altered fundamentally by further evidence.

It is obvious that many of the general features of Haydn's symphonies, features that might be thought to represent his originality, are to be found in the output of other composers too. Sometimes, the available information on dates and location permit us to state, quite categorically, that such and such a feature is to be found in the symphonies of minor composers before it is encountered in the music of Haydn; the presence of slow introductions is one such feature. More often that not, however, the bibliographical evidence does not permit that kind of conclusive factual statement. To the modern historian interested in stylistic development this may be a drawback but it should not be a debilitating one. More important than establishing who was the first to compose a symphony with a slow introduction, or one with a fugal finale or whatever, is to draw attention to when such a feature became prevalent. The study of the symphony in eighteenth-century Austria has already suffered from the more simplistic «who-did-what-first» kind of history in the case of the famous Monn symphony in D major printed in DTÖ in 1908. Dated 24 May 1740 the symphony, because of its novel four-movement structure, was hailed as a landmark in the development of the genre. Now it is clear that it was of no historical consequence whatsoever, since a four-movement structure did not become common until later in the century.

Moreover, the purpose of contextual study is not deny Haydn's originality in his symphonies but to define it more closely. At the beginning I posed the question «*how* original was he?»; a better and more refined question would be «what was the nature of Haydn's originality?». This is a vast topic and one that would require an evaluation of the Austrian symphony that is both deeper and broader than the one given here. Nevertheless, in conclusion, I will risk a few tentative observations, two detailed and others more general.

I have already mentioned that Haydn does not use the viola as a solo instrument in his symphonies, except for two brief passages in the

trio sections of Symphonies Nos. 6 and 15. Equally distinctive is the absence of two viola parts in his symphonies. This scoring is very common in the Austrian symphony of the mid-century, to be found, for instance, in the output of Dittersdorf, Gaßmann, Dussek and Ordóñez, but never in Haydn's symphonies. Was the composer deliberately cultivating a lean, transparent sound? Or did he simply not trust his players? That Haydn was aware of the broad tradition of a string section with two violas is shown in the *Applausus* cantata of 1768, composed in response to a commission from Zwettl abbey and not therefore a work for the Esterházy players, where the composer asks for two viola parts in two of the numbers (the duet *Dictamina mea* and the aria *Rerum quas perpendimus*).

The second observation is a more speculative one since it concerns a characteristic of Haydn's symphonies that is not prevalent in those of his contemporaries: movements cast as theme and variations. Haydn first used strophic variations in his symphonies in finale movements, beginning with Nos. 72 and 31 from the mid 1760s; later it is transferred to slow movements and also to rondo movements. But I have not encountered any variation movements in the symphonies of his Austrian contemporaries up to c. 1780. ⁽¹²⁾ And, if we turn, momentarily, to the symphonies of Mozart perhaps it is significant that none has a variations movement. Perhaps the inclusion of such movements within a symphony was a genuine innovation by Haydn.

The most striking conclusions are general ones. While many, if not most of the features of Haydn's symphonic output in the 1760s and 1770s can be found in symphonies of other composers, Haydn stands alone in the breadth and intensity of experimentation in his symphony output in this period; he seems to have been determined to explore the whole range of the Austrian symphony of the time in a manner not apparent in the output of any other single composer. For instance, Dittersdorf and Vanhal did not compose cycles that open with a slow first movement and were not consistently interested in contrapuntal procedures: Ordóñez and Albrechtsberger did not compose works with a programmatic content; and Michael Haydn, Hofmann, Gaßmann and Pichl were comparatively uninterested in symphonies in the minor key. Joseph Haydn did all of these things and more.

⁽¹²⁾ Two symphonies from the 1780s by Michael Haydn have variation movements, but none before that date: the slow movement of the Symphony in A (Perger 15, 1781) and the finale of the Symphony in D (Perger 21, 1785).

As has often been noted the early Esterházy years were altogether a period of diversity and experiment in Haydn's development. In the case of the symphony it seems that the composer was fully acquainted with the works of his Austrian contemporaries and, in that respect, he was not the isolated figure of Griesinger's quote. But there was another, even more vital aspect to his creativity: the investigation of the language itself, its syntax, grammar and rhetoric; how every element - melody, harmony, dynamic, rhythm and scoring - can combine to produce a new kind of expressivity, not only in sonata form first movements, but in slow movements, minuets and finales too. Occasionally, other composers would stumble on these qualities but none acquired the total intellectual command of Haydn. In comparative seclusion at the Esterházy court, Haydn was able to probe the inter-reaction between, on the one hand, the broad structures and characteristics of the Austrian symphony, familiar to his listeners and players, and, on the other hand, the dynamics of the language itself. This is how he became original.

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