

## Franz Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 102 and Symphony No. 104

Haydn spent most of his career in the employ of the Esterházy, concerned predominantly with producing music to suit the needs of the court. When his longtime employer Nicolaus the Magnificent died in 1790, however, Haydn was temporarily free to pursue other opportunities—as Giorgio Pestelli puts it, he “broke away from the *ancien régime* like a falling ripe fruit.” Several eager patrons offered him work, but it was the German violinist Johann Peter Salomon, a London impresario, who finally convinced the composer to make his long-promised trip to England. For the 1791 season—the first in which Salomon offered a public concert series—Haydn was promised £300 for an opera, £300 for six symphonies, and additional money for publication rights and other compositions. As his contemporary biographer Albert Christoph Dies reported, some of Haydn’s associates, including his close friend Mozart, were concerned about the composer making the trip at the advanced age of nearly 60.

“If it pleases my prince,” said Haydn, “I’ll go with you to London.” Prince Anton granted permission for the journey at once, but it was not all right as far as Haydn’s friends were concerned, the ones who had so often before tried to persuade him to leave Vienna. They reminded him of his age (sixty years) [sic], of the discomforts of a long journey, and of many other things to shake his resolve. But in vain! Mozart especially took great pains to say “Papa!” as he usually called him, “you have had no training for the great world, and you speak too few languages.” “Oh!” replied Haydn, “my language is understood all over the world.”

Judging from his overwhelmingly positive reception, Haydn’s language was certainly understood in London. He wrote to a friend, “Everyone wants to know me. I had to dine out six times up to now, and if I wanted, I could dine out every day; but first I must consider my health, and second my work.”

Haydn’s last twelve symphonies—including Nos. 102 and 104—were written for Salomon’s public concerts in London (although by 1795, Wilhelm Cramer had supplanted Salomon as the director of the series he had founded). Comparing these “London” symphonies to Haydn’s earlier works, Pestelli describes them as painted with an “artist’s brush” rather than with an “engraver’s tool”—works with Haydn’s unique stamp writ large. As a result, the pieces have a bold, monumental quality that made them natural models for composers of later generations, including Beethoven, Schubert, Rossini, and Weber.

Composed in 1794, Symphony No. 102 is now believed to be the work performed at the concert for which the “Miracle” Symphony was mistakenly named: during its premiere, a chandelier fell from the ceiling of the concert hall, but the audience miraculously escaped without injury (because they had rushed the stage, according to some reports). Whether or not it made listeners leave their seats, the symphony was extremely well-received. One contemporary report stated, “The best judges seem to doubt whether Haydn himself ever surpassed it. The last movement was encored; and the *Adagio* still more deservedly ought to have been.” The work is a study in contrast. From the portentous opening *Largo*, which has been compared to the raising of a stage curtain, bursts a jubilant *Vivace*, which maintains a driving intensity throughout. Above the second movement, marked *Adagio*, Haydn wrote “In nomine Domini”, an incipit he usually reserved for multi-movement works, suggesting that perhaps the segment may also have been performed alone. . Indeed, the movement itself began life as the *Adagio cantabile* from the Trio in F-sharp Minor, one of three works Haydn dedicated to Rebecca Schroeter, a pupil to whom he was particularly close. Following the jocular *Minuet*, the *Presto*—an essentially single-theme sonata form—concludes the work on a jubilant note.

Symphony No. 104 in D Major, Haydn’s final symphony, was first performed on May 4, 1795, at a benefit concert comprised entirely of the composer’s own music. A review of the concert neatly summarizes the characteristics for which Haydn’s late symphonies are often praised: “[Haydn] rewarded the good intentions of his friends by writing a new Overture [Symphony No. 104] for the occasion, which for fullness, richness, and majesty, in all its parts, is thought by some of the best judges to surpass all his other compositions.” Scholar Daniel Hertz continues, “In terms of their slow introductions alone we can fathom how true an observation this critic has hit upon, and from there extend the concept by pondering

how very central the slow introductions are to the individual character of the entire work in these late symphonies.”

Compared to the relatively subdued opening of Symphony No. 102, in which unison trumpet and timpani dissolve into a languid violin melody, Symphony No. 104 opens with a similar statement, but uttered much more boldly: a huge orchestral unison, punctuated with timpani rolls, which contrasts with eerie, almost foreboding music for strings alone. This exceptionally dramatic introduction sets the stage for the sharp contrasts that permeate the piece, from the irrepressible cheer of the opening *Allegro*, to the surprising major/minor shift in the *Andante*, to the humorous two-measure rests in the *Minuet*, to the folk-like charm of the finale. In many ways, Symphony No. 104—the ultimate “London” symphony—provides a fitting summation not only to the twelve works he provided for Salomon, but also to his contributions to the symphony as a whole. Noting Haydn’s unusual inscription on the symphony’s autograph score—in English, “The 12<sup>th</sup> I have composed in England”—Hertz concludes, “This extraordinary circumstance, taken together with the work’s emphatic closing gesture and its entire character, have raised the question as to whether he intended to signal then and there the end of his contributions to the genre he did so much to shape and perfect.”

### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Concerto for bassoon in B-flat Major, K. 191**

On June 4, 1774, at the age of eighteen, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart completed the work that is now one of the best known in the bassoon repertory: the Concerto for bassoon in B-flat Major, K. 191. The concerto is believed to be one of at least three—and possibly five—that Mozart composed for the instrument, of which only K. 191 is extant. In spite of its popularity today, little is known about the piece: although some believe that it was written for Thaddäus Freiherr von Dürnitz, an aristocrat and amateur bassoon player, there is no supporting evidence for this claim. Mozart most likely heard the bassoon used as a solo instrument in Paris, where it was used in *symphonies concertantes* and, occasionally, concertos.

Throughout the concerto, Mozart takes full advantage of the bassoon’s special qualities: its timbral contrasts between low and high notes, its ability to sound both comic and intensely melancholy, and its unique lyricism. The composer’s understanding of the instrument’s potential is evident from the start of the first movement, which highlights both colorful melodic leaps and agile staccato passages. The ravishing second movement, marked *Andante ma adagio* (literally, “walking pace, but slow”), opens with a phrase found in the eight-year old Mozart’s sketchbooks—and, more famously, in the aria “Porgi amor” from *Le Nozze di Figaro*. An exuberant *Rondo di Menuetto* brings the work to a gracefully virtuosic close.

### **Leopold Mozart: Concerto for trumpet in D Major**

Although Leopold Mozart’s most famous work is without a doubt his son Wolfgang, he was well-known in his day as a composer, teacher, and author. Of the few works he penned that are still performed, this trumpet concerto is one of the most popular. (Interestingly, although one of his most enduring legacies is an influential violin treatise called *Violinschule*, there are no extant violin concertos by the elder Mozart.) Composed in 1762 when his famous son was only six, Leopold’s trumpet concerto was written for Johann Andreas Schachter, a Salzburg trumpet player and friend of the Mozart family. One of the work’s most striking features is its form—two movements, instead of the increasingly traditional three. In both movements, the *galant* style’s politesse provides the perfect foil for the trumpet’s brilliance. In the opening *Adagio*, the stately tempo belies the trumpet’s virtuosic clarion statements, while in the concluding *Allegro moderato*, the soloist adds increasingly complex embellishments to the relatively simple theme.