

REVIEWS



BOOKS

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THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY: JOSEPH HAYDN AND BRITAIN

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Toward the end of his life Haydn told his biographer Albert Christoph Dies that soon after arriving in London, he was visited by an officer who wished to commission two military marches (Dies, *Biographische Nachrichten von Joseph Haydn* (1810; reprinted Berlin: Henschel, 1962), 122). At first he declined the offer: in Vernon Gotwals's translation of Dies, Haydn protested 'that the opera *Orfeo* left him no extra time, that he only wrote when he was in the right humor for it, and could not know whether the *estro musicale* [musical inspiration] would take him early or late. He would – if it were agreeable – get a competent composer to write them under his personal supervision.' The officer responded to these rather turgid excuses with his own form of persuasion, tacit but hardly silent: he played with the coins in his pocket. Haydn, upon hearing 'the sound of gold', changed his mind, for he recalled 'that England was to be my land of opportunity' (Gotwals, *Haydn: Two Contemporary Portraits* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 149). A price (an exorbitant one) was named, a deadline set and a deal struck.

From this anecdote we may learn a thing or two about Haydn biography per se (for example, he did outsource commissions on occasion, and he did in fact write a pair of marches, HVIII:1–2, for an English officer). But perhaps even more interesting is what the story prompts us to consider about Haydn historiography. Haydn, who had only just ended decades of service to an employer whose musical requirements it was his job to fulfil, is portrayed as one whose nature is to compose only when moved, when inspired, to do so. He must be reminded to be practical, for he is fundamentally a romantic artist. This is Haydn's (version of) Haydn, we could say, and it is also Dies's Haydn; we cannot know where one ends and the other begins.

But this is also translator Gotwals's Haydn. In the original German, Haydn calls England 'das Land meiner Ernte': literally 'the land of [his] harvest' and figuratively (in a usage common since the seventeenth century) the reward for his labours. When Gotwals supplies 'land of opportunity', he makes use of an English-language idiom, and idioms by their nature carry histories and associations of their own. 'Land of opportunity' did not come into use until the twentieth century and has typically referred to the United States of America – by association, the notion of leaving the old world for a new start and a chance at earning prosperity. (Translation theorist Antoine Berman considers the dangers of idioms in translation in 'La traduction comme épreuve de l'étranger', *Texte* 4 (1985), 67–81; translated as 'Translation and the Trials of the Foreign' in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2000), 276–289.) If Dies's Haydn is an old man looking back on his own life and contemplating the reward he has earned, Gotwals's Haydn is a participant in a larger political and cultural phenomenon; he is more youthful, forward-looking and optimistic – more modern. The latter image has had significant traction in Haydn scholarship; in *Land of Opportunity: Joseph Haydn and Britain* it is both reinforced (not least by the title) and examined in a collection of eleven essays.

Alan Davison, Caroline Grigson and Christopher Wiley contribute chapters about the roles of artists and writers in the development of Haydn's reputation. Davison, describing Thomas Hardy's portrait of the



composer as propaganda, interprets the painting's symbolism: a bound score evokes the permanence of the musical object and the necessity of repeated hearings, the highlighted and lengthened forehead suggests the creative energy of genius and the misplaced drapes contribute a 'visual corollary' to the pairing of 'fantastic whim' with 'certain science' (73) – a key argument of the case being made in London by the 'moderns' on Haydn's behalf. Grigson considers the supporting role played in this project by Thomas Holcroft, a 'jobbing poet, playwright, actor and radical thinker' (84). Holcroft wrote an adulatory poem ('Who is the mighty Master, that can trace / Th'eternal lineaments of Nature's face?') that was published several times, starting in September 1794. Wiley, meanwhile, explains in an especially rich chapter the significance of motifs prominent in nineteenth-century Haydn biography. Stories emphasizing how the composer ascended from the status of a servant to that of an aristocratic equal, but nevertheless retained pride in his humble origins, provided an ideal illustration to self-taught amateurs, concert-goers and enthusiasts that social attainment was possible through art, and at the same time that art was more important than wealth. The creation of 'opportunity Haydn' has been a collaborative and long-lasting enterprise.

Thomas Tolley and Balázs Mikusi focus on the composer's self-fashioning. Tolley describes, in capacious and interesting detail, caricatures by Henry William Bunbury obtained by Haydn in London. In *Bethnal Green*, the dog of a too-short master returns from a hunt with only a bone, and the hunter's too-fat wife stands bored beneath a sign warning poachers of 'man traps'; in *A Smoking Club*, men sit facing one another as if intending to converse but actually engaged only in smoking. Themes of obliviousness and time-wasting allow these prints to be appreciated solely for their humour, but alert viewers, Haydn among them, would have picked up subtler political messages. The wife yawns as she carries her husband's wig, signifying the ineptitude and tedious infighting in the Whig party. The act of smoking, once associated with moral laxity, had by the 1790s come to suggest sympathy with 'a set of radical political objectives'. 'It seems possible', Tolley intrepidly suggests, that 'Haydn himself may have sympathized with these at the time that he acquired the print' (45). Mikusi, meanwhile, draws needed attention to Haydn's collection of music printed in England. While much has been made of London's influence on Haydn's instrumental style, the composer 'may have been rather more interested to explore the strong British tradition of genres such as the oratorio, the partsong or the canon, which he himself had contributed to but sparingly earlier on' (117). Clues from the visual and musical collections shed light on Haydn's own efforts to shape his inward and outward identities – efforts that may go beyond or indeed against the picture of Haydn created by others.

Chapters by David Rowland and Rupert Ridgewell appear to have less to do with Haydn's London period, but on the question of 'opportunity Haydn' versus 'reward Haydn', they provide context. Rowland gives an account of Haydn's contract with Muzio Clementi's associate Frederick Augustus Hyde. Very little music was published as a result of the contract; Haydn the person all but disappears from the story as Clementi seeks a collaboration with Artaria for publishing Haydn's music, a collaboration that he insists will be 'mutually beneficial' to both publishers (105). Publishers' interests are also the focus of Rupert Ridgewell's chapter, in which the publication history of the Op. 40 trios provides a case study of the practical process and the commercial pressures involved in publishing music in 1780s Vienna. Haydn was certainly a participant, for he demanded and received a number of corrections, but he was only one of several decision makers. The business of riding Haydn's coat-tails encapsulates one of the interesting anecdotes Arthur Searle provides in his chapter on Haydn manuscript sources held in the British Library. Three pages of sketches for the oratorio *The Creation* were sold to the British Museum in 1871 by the granddaughters of Luigia Polzelli, a singer whom Searle winkingly describes as 'particularly close' to Haydn. Bound with the sketches is a lithograph copy of a letter from Haydn to the granddaughters' father, Anton, whom Haydn addresses as 'Mein lieber Sohn' ('My dear son'; 226).

Haydn as he appears in Otto Biba's chapter is not only the Eszterháza music director but also an all-round multitasking opera manager. Pointing to recently discovered annotations in Haydn's hand found in a printed libretto for *Piramo e Tisbe*, Biba notes how the composer's annotations make room for additional musical expressivity and offer 'unexpected evidence of Haydn's skill as a poet in the Italian language' (146). Ingrid Fuchs, through a seriatim account of the keyboard sonatas (specifically their dedicatees) and the



string quartets (their commissions and first performers), presents Haydn as a composer concerned with the particulars of first-performance contexts. Fuchs's Haydn does not write timeless music for the ages. But neither does he cater to a growing but less sophisticated concert audience; rather, he writes increasingly demanding works that satisfy both the female pianists 'who, if they were professional, would have to be given the rank of virtuoso' (151) and the professional string players 'of the highest quality' (162) who played quartets on stage. Taken together, Biba's and Fuchs's chapters outline a trajectory not towards democratization (as seen in Wiley's chapter) but towards the equally modern ideals of professionalization and specialization.

Certainly, London was different from Vienna, and not only in the way it fostered and rewarded entrepreneurship. Londoners treated Haydn as a celebrity rather than a Kapellmeister, and they feted him for his symphonies rather than his operas. London had several newspapers that featured music criticism and reports of musical activity; Vienna's newspapers rarely carried musical material other than advertisements placed by publishers and copyists. But, as editor David Wyn Jones explains in his chapter, Haydn was no outsider in London. The British royal family was German, and German was spoken at court. London was awash with German musicians, and Charles Burney had been advocating music 'of the Austrian school' for over a decade. Austria and Britain were linked politically as well, a context that Wyn Jones compellingly describes as a shaping force behind the composition and early reception of the Austrian 'Volkslied' and the canzonetta 'Sailor's Song'. Haydn's London period emerges as a set of experiences that were harnessed in service to something even bigger than the composer's legacy: the political ideal of international solidarity.

The conception of London as Haydn's 'Land of Opportunity' proves, finally, to have its rewards. At once anachronistic yet relevant, it prompts us to consider how Haydn's reputation was shaped and put to use by a variety of agents and in an array of different circumstances. And it reminds us, moreover, to be conscious of the ways in which we moderns inevitably view the objects of our study from our own current perspectives.

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EMILY I. DOLAN

THE ORCHESTRAL REVOLUTION: HAYDN AND THE TECHNOLOGIES OF TIMBRE

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The dust jacket of Emily Dolan's book is an unusually striking one. Against a plain white background stands a colourful image of a Heath-Robinson-looking device, an object that unites parts of various orchestral instruments, images of individuals and snatches of music, all loaded on sprung wheels, ready to be animated into sound. It could be a surreal version of one of the mechanical instruments described in the volume, the orchestrion, and it neatly captures Dolan's subject matter, orchestral sonority from the late eighteenth century into the first decades of the nineteenth century (and sometimes beyond). For the author the history of the sound of the orchestra in this period has been neglected in musicological study. There are studies of orchestral music as text and studies of the changing aesthetic of instrumental music, but not of the immediate experience of the listener, the actual sound an orchestra makes. It is even odder than that. Studies of individual instruments, performance practice and the development of the orchestra as an organizational unit have not been accompanied by extended evaluation of the resulting sonic product, for the obvious reason that there is no aural evidence to draw on, except the problematic sound of surviving mechanical instruments and, even more contentious, the imagined sounds produced by historically inspired performances. But, as