

CD 1

1 Symphony No. 92 in G, ('Oxford', Mvt 4: Presto)

That music was written by a man at the very height of his powers. It was first played in England as part of the three-day-long celebrations which surrounded the awarding of a doctorate to its composer by Oxford University. From that point onward the man in question could call himself, and indeed liked to call himself, Doctor Joseph Haydn. And he had good reason to relish the title. He'd come a long way. As he stood, honoured and (by his own account) embarrassed in his flowing Oxford robes, he could have claimed, on the eve of his sixtieth year, to be the most successful, the richest, the most famous composer in the world. But his innate modesty wouldn't allow him to. He was, as others saw him anyway, a rather simple man, and one who, like another great composer, Bach, attributed the fruits of his genius to unremitting hard work and a boundless faith in the benevolence of the almighty. Indeed almost everything he wrote was formally designated as being consecrated to the glory of God.

He was born, in all likelihood, on April Fool's Day, 1732, though it may have been the day before. In any case he nourished all his life a taste for jokes which earned him, at various times, both fame and notoriety. His father was a wheelwright and wagon-builder in a small village near the border between Austria and Hungary, and his mother was a cook at the local manor house. Neither parent had any musical education but his father played the harp by ear and had a great love of folksong. By the time he was five, little Joseph, still uneducated and apparently destined to become a manual labourer like his parents, could match his father's repertoire almost song for song. When he was six, the family was visited by a relation through marriage who, as a professional musician, recognised at once that this little boy was something out of the ordinary. And so it was that Johann Franck, the said relation, took responsibility for the child's education. With the parents' consent he took the boy away with him. At the age of six, Haydn effectively bade farewell to his parents, and made his way in unfamiliar company to an unfamiliar

town called Hainburg, which, after the quietness of his native village, seemed to him like a teeming metropolis. Here he discovered that his benefactor was a taskmaster of the Dickensian variety, a man who educated by means of what he called his 'tingling rod'. But Haydn was indebted to him throughout his life. As he told his earliest biographer several decades later:

HAYDN: I shall owe it to that man to my dying day that he taught me so many things, even if I did receive more beatings than food.

As a guest in Franck's house (though it must have felt more like a prison) Haydn was not only underfed, and with bad food at that, he was also badly clothed and this bothered him almost as much.

HAYDN: My parents, you see, had accustomed me from my earliest youth to discipline concerning cleanliness and order, and these two things became second nature to me. At Franck's, I couldn't help noticing, very early on, and greatly to my distress, that I was getting dirty, and though I thought rather highly of my little person, I was not always able to avoid getting stains on my clothes, and I was dreadfully ashamed. The fact is, I'm afraid, that I became a regular little ragamuffin.

Maybe. But at least he was becoming an educated ragamuffin, and accomplished enough as a musician to attract the attention of a choirmaster from Vienna who was scouting for promising choristers. What Franck had begun, Reutter, the choirmaster in question, undertook to finish.

At the age of eight Haydn arrived in Vienna, where, at least in the formal sense, he was to complete his musical education, as a chorister at St Stephen's Cathedral. Not that he was much happier – certainly not at first. Reutter was just as attentive with the rod and as neglectful of nutrition as Franck had been, and Haydn, who showed not only exceptional musical talent but an apparently incorrigible streak of mischief, came in for more than the normal share of chastisement. He was also an indefatigable worker, though the

curriculum available to him was nothing like as well rounded as we would expect today. Latin, arithmetic and writing were given minimal attention – and, surprisingly in a church choir school, so was religious education. But there were some very capable instructors of several instruments, particularly, of course, the voice. Haydn excelled in them all and became both a splendid singer and a highly versatile, though never quite virtuosic, instrumentalist who could play most of the instruments of the orchestra very respectably. Amazingly though – almost incredibly for a choir school – there was no instruction in musical theory. Haydn could only remember having two private theory lessons with Reutter himself, and neither of these amounted to much.

HAYDN: In those days I used to think everything was fine as long as the paper was well covered with notes. Reutter laughed about my immature attempts, about movements which no voice could sing and no instrument could play, and he mocked me for composing in sixteen parts before I had learned how to write in two.

Reutter, whatever his gifts, was clearly not the man to teach him, though he could hardly have failed to realise that Haydn was not your standard, run-of-the-mill chorister. On the other hand, you never know. One of Beethoven's most eminent teachers confidently predicted that he would never amount to anything, and there are similar stories about many great men.

For the most part, Haydn had to depend on books, notably two, by Mattheson and Fux respectively. With characteristic diligence, he worked his way through both volumes, writing out the exercises, putting them aside for a while, then returning to them and polishing them till he considered them perfect – small wonder that he developed an early talent for writing choral music.

2 **Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo: 'Kleine Orgelmesse' (Kyrie)**

3 The Kyrie from Haydn's so-called 'Little Organ Mass'.

To say that Haydn in his youth had a genius for misbehaving would be exaggerating, but not by much. It attracted attention in high places long before his genius for music became readily apparent – as his friend and first biographer Georg August Griesinger reported of Haydn the choirboy:

GRIESINGER: Once, when the Court was building the summer castle at Schönbrunn, Haydn had to sing there in the choir during Whitsuntide. Except for the church services, he used to play with the other boys, climbing the scaffolding round the construction and making a terrible racket on the staging. And what happened? One day, the boys suddenly noticed a lady watching them. This was none other than the Empress Maria Theresa herself, who ordered someone to get these noisy boys off the scaffolding and to threaten them with a proper thrashing if they ever dared try it again. The next day Haydn, driven by curiosity, climbed the scaffolding alone, was caught and duly collected the promised thrashing. Many years later, in 1773, when Haydn was in the service of Prince Esterházy, the Empress paid a visit to Esterház. Haydn presented himself before her and thanked her most humbly for the reward he had received at her command so many years before. He had to recount the entire episode, occasioning much merriment and laughter.

But he'd narrowly escaped a far, far worse assault, not long after his exploits on the scaffolding. This, though, was not something he would have discussed with the Empress.

GRIESINGER: At that time there were many *castrati* employed at court and in the Viennese churches, and the director of the Choir School, doubtless considering that he was about to make young Haydn's fortune, proposed to turn him by means of this operation into a permanent soprano, and actually asked the father for his permission. The horrified parent set forth at once for Vienna and fearing that the operation might already have been performed, entered the room where his son was, in a state of the greatest anxiety, enquiring, 'Dear Sepperl, are you in pain? Can you still walk?' Overjoyed at discovering his son intact, he roundly condemned this barbarous practice, and what's more, was

supported in this by a *castrato* who happened to be present. The truth of this story was attested by a number of people to whom Haydn had often related it.

But his manhood was ensured, of course, at the expense of his once-beautiful voice, and his days in the choir were thus necessarily numbered (the Empress herself had been heard to observe that he now sang like a crow). Indeed his star was rapidly being eclipsed by his younger brother Michael, who sang, according to the Empress, ‘like an angel’. He was also a far more precocious and promising composer than his elder sibling, but shared his gift for mischief. When Joseph left the choir, however, only a little prematurely, it was not on vocal or on musical grounds. And thereby hangs a tale – indeed two of them.

Having for some time been annoyed by the pigtail worn by a fellow chorister, Haydn elected one day during choir-practice to seize hold of the offending appendage and snip it off with a newly acquired pair of scissors. Well, such things were not done in self-respecting choir schools. Reutter was naturally outraged and sentenced Haydn to a caning in front of the whole school. The moment of punishment arrived. Haydn, having tried every way to escape it, finally declared that he would leave at once and not be a chorister any more rather than be publicly humiliated.

REUTTER: Oh you may certainly go, and the sooner the better *but not before being caned.*

So, Haydn duly found himself on one bitter November day in 1749 turned out into the street to fend for himself, still smarting and possessed of three poor shirts, one threadbare jacket and no money.

4 Haydn was now seventeen (boys' voices broke later in those days), and couldn't hope for any material support from his parents, who were simply too poor to help. They did return, though, with new determination, to an idea that had lain dormant for ten years: they implored their son, his mother with tears in her eyes, to yield at last to their hopes and prayers and dedicate himself to the priesthood. As Griesinger reports,

GRIESINGER: The parents gave their son no peace. Haydn, however, remained unswerving in his purpose. He could provide no reason for opposing them (the force of genius was as yet mysterious even to himself) but kept steadfastly repeating, to their uncomprehending dismay, 'I do not want to be a priest'.

So, he remained in Vienna, and embarked, all alone, on the hardest period of his life. As he remembered in old age:

HAYDN: I nearly starved. I had to eke out a miserable existence largely by teaching young pupils. Many *geniuses*, I know, have been ruined by having to earn their keep since they had no time to study. I experienced this, too, and would never have learnt what little I did without regularly working far into the night.

Of course it didn't make it any easier that after his ignominious departure from the choir school, he had nothing in the way of references or useful contacts. What he did have was great native intelligence, a natural gift for making friends, extraordinary determination, and a burning artistic ambition, fuelled by his phenomenal yet still undeveloped genius as a musician.

For the next ten years or so Haydn lived the hazardous life of a freelance musician – and in the 1750s there were few of those around. Musicians at that time were almost by definition either vagabonds or servants of the nobility or the church. As he embarked on his newly independent life, there was no mistaking which category Haydn belonged to. He began sleeping rough. Later, thanks to the generosity of a friend, himself without much money, he found lodgings in a wretched garret, without a stove, and under a badly patched roof that let in the rain and the snow. The money brought in by teaching was pitiful, and though he had a roof of sorts over his head at night he could barely afford any food. He grew so desperate at one point that against all his inclinations he seriously contemplated entering the Servite Order as a monk, just to have enough to eat. That,

though, would have meant giving up any chance of a musical career, and he thought better of it. In any case, things began to look up. More work came in, and he soon found himself dividing his time between giving lessons, studying, and performing – as both instrumentalist and singer. He joined street bands, playing for money in evening serenades, and found occasional employment in proper orchestras. At home, such as it was, he gave virtually every waking hour to the study of composition and was largely able to forget his immediate circumstances.

HAYDN: When I was sitting at my old, worm-eaten clavichord, even as the snow settled on my bedclothes, I envied no king his wealth or happiness... It was during this period, too, that I came upon the first six sonatas of Emanuel Bach. I didn't leave my clavier until I had mastered them all, after which I played them many times for my own delight, especially when I felt oppressed or discouraged.

5 C.P.E. Bach: Keyboard Sonata in A, Wq. 65/37 (Mvt 3: Allegro di molto)

6 Part of a sonata by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach.

Haydn is so famous for being cheerful that it comes almost as a shock to hear him talking about being ‘oppressed’ and ‘discouraged’. Haydn's feelings of depression and discouragement, even at this point in his life, had less to do with his practical circumstances than with his feelings of inadequacy as a composer. Not in terms of his gifts (those he attributed entirely to God and never doubted) but in terms of knowledge, accomplishment and technical skill. He was undereducated, there were big gaps in his knowledge of musical theory, and he knew that his compositions of the period betrayed this, certainly to any sophisticated musician. And here again, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach came to the rescue. Haydn didn't just play his music, he learned from it.

HAYDN: Anyone who knows my music well can hear what a big debt I owe to this great man, and will see how well I understood him, having studied his music with most unceasing industry and care.

Haydn's circumstances may have been dire by most people's standards, but generally his spirits were high and his sense of mischief undiminished.

GRIESINGER: He once took it into his head to gather a number of musicians for a rather unusual evening serenade. The rendezvous was in the Tiefer Graben, where the musicians were to place themselves, some in front of houses and some in corners. There was even a kettle-drummer on the high bridge. Most of the players had no idea why they had been summoned, and each had been told to play whatever he wanted once a signal had been given. Hardly had this hideous concert begun when the astonished residents threw open their windows and began to shout, to hiss and to whistle at this music from hell. Meanwhile the night watchmen appeared. The players escaped in time, except for the kettle-drummer and a violinist, both of whom were arrested and taken away. They were set at liberty a few days later, however, since they could not be persuaded to identify the ringleader.

It was only a little time before the ringleader's name became familiar in a rather different role – as the composer of numerous light pieces and little dances which enjoyed considerable popularity in some of Vienna's less exalted places. He was also making new friends, one of whom was to become a very famous composer in his own right: Carl Ditters, later known as Dittersdorf.

GRIESINGER: Once, as the two were roaming the streets at night, they stopped in front of a common beer hall in which half drunken and sleepy musicians were miserably sawing away at one of Haydn's minuets. 'Ach, let's go in!' said Haydn. Dittersdorf at once agreed. So into the tavern they went, Haydn placing himself beside the first violinist and asking offhandedly, 'Tell me, who wrote that minuet?' The latter replied 'Why it is the work of Haydn!' Haydn then stood straight in front of him, proclaiming with feigned

indignation, 'That's a very pig of a minuet! Absolute rubbish!' 'What? What? What?!!!' the violinist yelled, himself in a true rage. He leapt from his chair, closely followed by the other players, who were ready to break their instruments over Haydn's head; and so they might have done had not Dittersdorf, who was a big man, put up his arms to shield Haydn and shoved him vigorously out the door.

For all his success at writing for street bands and itinerant serenaders, Haydn remained painfully conscious not only that he still had a lot to learn, but that he would have to acquire some sort of patron if he were to make a wider and more respectable reputation for himself. He must transcend the life of a vagabond. Well, as it happened, the opportunity for both soon arose, in the shape of two coincidences, each directly connected to his poverty. One evening, when he and some friends were out serenading, a door opened, and there stood Vienna's most famous theatrical comedian, one Johann Kurz. He'd been struck by both the humour and the originality of Haydn's music and promptly invited him in. When Haydn left, it was with a commission to write a comic opera to a libretto by Kurz himself. Within a matter of days he completed the music, and when the opera was staged it enjoyed a great success – until it was banned by a nobleman who claimed that it had been written specifically to mock him. But it had been a start, and it did wonders for Haydn's self-confidence, as well as improving his financial situation.

The second, significant, coincidence was more surprising still. It so happened that living in the same building as Haydn was the famous Italian poet and opera librettist Metastasio, who introduced him to the famous but now aged Italian composer Porpora, certainly the most important musician Haydn had yet encountered. It was a turning point.

HAYDN: Porpora gave voice lessons to the mistress of the Venetian ambassador, Correr, and since Porpora himself was too grand and too fond of his ease to accompany her on the piano himself, he entrusted that function to me. There was no lack of foul-mouthed insults and abuse, not to mention jabs in the ribs; but I put up with all of it because I greatly profited from Porpora in singing, in composition and in the Italian language.

He was also impounded, effectively, as Porpora's servant, brushing his clothes, cleaning his shoes, and being treated as little better than a common lackey. But by the time this rather unpleasant apprenticeship came to an end, Haydn was a highly trained, fully equipped professional musician. Well and good; but he was also unemployed, and at this precarious stage of his existence fate dealt him a cruel blow: he was robbed. Stripped of all his worldly goods, and they weren't many, he had only his wits to fall back on. But years later he recalled all these misfortunes without regret.

HAYDN: Young people should learn from my example that something can come out of nothing. What I have become is all the result of dire need.

Nevertheless, he was lucky (and gifted) enough to be offered a succession of helping hands. Through his association with Porpora, Haydn, despite his youth, had begun to mix with the nobility, who were then the only real stepping-stone to the advancement of a young composer in society. Two in particular played a key role in furthering Haydn's career. First came the Baron von Fürnberg, effectively the head of the Imperial household, who appointed him as music master to his family, offered him the hospitality of his summer home, and frequently invited him to play chamber music. During their playing together of one of Haydn's string trios, Fürnberg suggested that in addition to two violins and cello it might be fun to try adding a part for viola and open the way to some musical foursomes. From this chance remark grew the whole idea of the string quartet as we now know it. Haydn set to work, and the rest, as they say, is history. But contrary to popular belief, he didn't 'invent' the string quartet. Music for four string instruments had been around for a long time, dating back to Elizabethan days, and it was being written throughout his childhood and youth, in Italy, Germany and his native Austria by the likes of Tartini, Sammartini, Stamitz and the now hardly remembered Florian Gassmann. Virtually all of these, though, were based on orchestral models, if not actually intended for full string orchestra, and most of them highlighted solo instruments in the manner of a concerto. It was Haydn who built and developed what's been regarded by many musicians and connoisseurs for two centuries as the highest form of musical art. It was

he who pioneered its standard four-movement structure, making it the chamber counterpart of the classical symphony – which he also pioneered. It was he who brought the string quartet to its first great flowering, subsequently equalled, perhaps, only by Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. And it was he who made it the most perfect forum for true musical conversation at the highest level. What he also did, though, possibly to a unique degree, was to demonstrate that there was nothing incompatible between the highest art and a sense of humour. The prank-loving youth, the same man who organised that cacophonous serenade which led to two arrests, grew up into perhaps the most refined wit in the history of music.

7 String Quartet in E flat, Op. 33 No. 2 (Mvt 4: Finale)

8 The teasing finale of the String Quartet in E flat, Op. 33 No. 2, known as ‘The Joke’ Quartet.

Haydn didn’t reach that kind of mastery overnight. Who could? In fact in many ways he was a late bloomer – and, come to that, a rather slow, reflective thinker. But it would be only a slight exaggeration to say that his first string quartets made him famous overnight. They were certainly his first works to achieve widespread popularity at the highest level. And with that, his days of hunger were over. His days of humility, on the other hand, were to be lifelong. As a German visitor to Baron von Fürnberg remarked, after hearing some of Haydn's early quartets:

VISITOR: The man was modest to the point of timidity, despite the fact that everybody present was enchanted by these compositions. And he was not to be persuaded that his works were worthy of being presented to the musical world.

But presented to the world they were, and Haydn was immodest enough not to mind. Whatever reservations he may have had about the works themselves, he can only have been happy at their popularity, which increased almost day by day.

The quartets, though, weren't the only works that were catching on – which brings us to the second person to provide crucial help in furthering Haydn's career. Countess Thun, a highly accomplished and discerning amateur whose later friends included Mozart and Beethoven, had come across a manuscript of one of his early piano sonatas at a Viennese dealer's and had been struck at once by its quality and individuality. The composer himself was probably unaware that the sonata was available at all, much less from a reputable dealer. He may even have forgotten all about it. At this early stage of his career, he seems to have parted with his manuscripts as lightly as if they were disposable handkerchiefs, feeling honoured at their acceptance by their chosen recipients and never considering that they should be properly printed, much less published. Given his poverty-stricken background and his later business acumen, this seems a rather surprising lapse of judgement at a time when he was still far from well-off. Characteristically of Haydn at this time, it was not he who sought out the Countess, but the other way around. On the strength of the music alone, she made enquiries, sent for the composer, and was as impressed by the man as by the music (not least by his frankness on the subject of his departure from the Choir School). She gave him money for a better suit of clothes and, following Fürnberg's example, hired him as her keyboard tutor. As such, he provided her not only with guidance and instruction, but with new music to play.

9 Piano Sonata L. 11 in B flat, Hob. XVI:2 (Mvt 1: Moderato)

10 Part of an early piano sonata, very possibly written for Haydn's most highly born pupil Countess Thun.

Now confirmed as a teacher of the nobility, Haydn's reputation grew: he was soon able to double his fees (more than double actually), and he established a parallel career as a teacher of composition. Word got around, and in 1759 Haydn, now twenty-seven, made the breakthrough he'd been waiting for – as Griesinger explains.

GRIESINGER: He was engaged as Music Director to Count Morzin in Vienna at a salary of two hundred gulden, free lodging and board at the officers' table.

Here he was finally able to enjoy the happiness of a carefree existence; he was quite contented. He spent the winter in Vienna and the summer in Bohemia near Pilsen. He used to like to relate, in later years, how one day he was sitting at the harpsichord, and the beautiful Countess Morzin leant over him in order to see the notes, when her neckerchief came undone.

HAYDN: It was the first time I had ever seen such a sight; I became confused, my playing faltered, my fingers became glued to the keys. ‘What is that, Haydn, what are you doing?’ cried the Countess; most respectfully I answered: ‘But, Countess, your grace, who would not be undone at such a sight?’

It seems unlikely that Haydn's lifelong love of women was born with that first glimpse, though it must at least have been nourished. But Haydn was unlucky in love.

It was at around this time that he first fell in love with one of his own pupils, Therese Keller, and his hopes were dashed when she decided to become a nun. But he'd set his heart on marriage, almost from the moment he'd become financially secure, so he married her sister instead, largely under pressure from the lady herself. It was one of his worst decisions. Maria Keller seems to have been pretty unattractive, both in appearance and personality, and their marriage was a failure virtually from the start.

GRIESINGER: Altogether his choice was not a happy one, for his wife had a domineering, unfriendly character; and he had carefully to hide his income from her since she was a spendthrift. She was also bigoted, and was always inviting clergymen to dinner; she had many masses said and was rather more liberal in her support of charity than her financial situation allowed. Once, when Haydn had done me a favour for which he would take no recompense, it was suggested that I offer something to his wife instead; he answered:

HAYDN: She doesn't deserve anything, for it is a matter of indifference to her whether her husband is a cobbler or an artist.

She also used his manuscripts for curling papers or as underlays for her pastries. But Haydn's greatest regrets were emotional not financial. As he told Griesinger, albeit rather simplistically:

HAYDN: My wife was incapable of having children, and thus I was less indifferent to the charms of other women.

Haydn for some time kept the marriage a secret, since his employer insisted on his servants remaining single, but his days in the Morzin court were numbered, in any case. The Count ran into financial difficulties, had to reduce his enormous expenses, and so was forced, reluctantly, to let Haydn go. As it happens, Haydn was now well enough known, both for his music and his attractive character, not to remain unemployed for too long, and Morzin was keen to do all he could for his most distinguished ex-servant. In fact, the die was already cast. It was at one of Morzin's last concerts that Prince Paul Anton Esterházy had first heard Haydn's music, directed by the composer himself, and it had made a great impression on him. So it was that on 1 May, 1761 Haydn was signed on as an Esterházy 'house officer' (though it seems he'd already acted for the family unofficially before that date). His official title was 'Vice-Kapellmeister'; unofficially, he was *the* Kapellmeister, in all respects but one. The official Kapellmeister, the *Oberkapellmeister*, was one Gregor Werner, who was now very old and in poor health. Haydn's appointment as his immediate subordinate relieved him of all duties other than the coordination and, if he was up to it, the composition of choir music. And to begin with, the two men got on very well. As to Haydn's own responsibilities, his typically wordy contract left him in no doubt as to what was expected of him.

OFFICIAL: The said *Vice-Kapellmeister* shall be under permanent obligation to compose such pieces of music as his Serene Princely Highness may command, and not to communicate such new compositions to anyone, nor to allow them to be copied but to retain them wholly for the exclusive use of his Highness; nor must he compose for any other person without the knowledge and gracious Permission of his Highness.

The said Haydn shall appear daily (whether here in Vienna or on the estates) in the antichamber before and after midday, and inquire whether a high Princely order for a musical performance has been given; to wait for this order and on its receipt to communicate its contents to the other musicians.

The said *Vice-Kapellmeister* shall take careful charge of all the music and musical instruments, and shall be responsible for ensuring that they are not ruined and rendered useless through carelessness or neglect.

The said Haydn shall be obliged to instruct the female vocalists, in order that they may not again forget (when staying in the country) that which they have been taught with much effort and at great expense in Vienna, and inasmuch as the said *Vice-Kapellmeister* is proficient on various instruments, he shall take care to practice on all those with which he is acquainted.

Among the first pieces of music that His Serene Princely Highness commanded the said Haydn to compose was a set of four symphonies relating to the four times of day: morning, afternoon, evening and night. In the event Haydn seems to have dispensed with the last one, but the Prince can hardly have been less than pleased at what he got. From the opening movement of the very first of these, he was convinced that his choice had been right.

[11] Symphony No. 6 in D, ('Le Matin', Mvt: 1: Adagio–Allegro)

[12] As Vice-Kapellmeister, Haydn's duties were not by any means confined to the musical. His contract also stipulated:

OFFICIAL: The said Haydn shall be considered and treated as a house officer. As may be expected from an honourable house officer in a princely court, he will be temperate, and will know that he must treat the musicians placed under him not overbearingly, but with *mildness* and *leniency* – *modestly*, *quietly* and *honestly*.

This is especially the case when music will be performed before *His Serene Princely Highness*, at which time said *Vice-Kapellmeister* and his subordinates shall always appear in uniform; and said Haydn shall take care that

not only he but all those dependent upon him shall follow the instructions which have been given to them, appearing neatly in white stockings, white linen, powdered, and either with pigtail or hairbag, but otherwise of identical appearance. *Therefore:*

The other Musicians are responsible to said Vice-Kapellmeister, thus he shall the more take care to conduct himself in an exemplary manner, so that the subordinates may follow the example of his good qualities; consequently the said Haydn *shall abstain from undue familiarity, from eating and drinking, and from other intercourse with them so that he will not lose their respect, which is his due, but on the contrary preserve it;* for these subordinates should the more remember their respectful duties if it be considered how unpleasant to their senior officer must be the consequences of any discord or dispute.

This was a job, in short, not only for a musician but for a leader and a diplomat – and in both roles Haydn proved himself, as they say, to the manner born. His tact and diplomacy would have done him proud as a politician or as a member of the national government. He supported and represented his musicians with unflagging energy, and with a skill and humour which only enhanced his reputation with the Prince, indeed with a succession of princes. With various leaves of absence, Haydn was to remain in the Esterházy household for the rest of his career – a career that saw him established as the world's greatest, most famous and best-loved composer. And for the whole of that time he wore the servant's livery that befitted his social rank.

As he discovered very early on, the rigid class structure and social hierarchy common to the whole of Europe at that time applied equally to the nobility and to their servants. The potential minefield of rankings and petty jealousies faced him with challenges that he recognised at once – and he was set a good example. On Haydn's first day in his new post, he found himself 'protected' by the very man who had drawn up his contract, one Johann Stiffel, the official court secretary. As we learn in an article by the French writer N.E. Flamery, published in 1810:

FLAMERY: It seems that the Haus-Hofmeister (or majordomo), a certain J. Neumann, attempted to oust Haydn from his newly assigned place at the officers' table. Haydn stubbornly refused to budge, whereupon Neumann took Haydn's place-setting and moved it down to the far end of the table. Without saying a word, the afore-mentioned Secretary went and took his place next to that now assigned to Haydn; the other officers followed suit and the furious majordomo was left in solitary splendour at his end of the table. The matter was taken before the Prince, who said to Haydn, 'You have offended an old servant of this House, whom I hold in high regard'. Haydn tried to defend his position and ended by saying, 'His pretension and his way of insisting were an insult that your Vice-Kapellmeister found it impossible to tolerate'. Whereupon the Prince smiled, and promised to arrange the affair in a satisfactory manner. The next day Neumann was given another place. Thus did Haydn learn the art of diplomacy and courtly intrigue.

And one of the first things he did was to write a number of concertos, showcasing the talents and accomplishments of his best players – an interesting move both diplomatically and musically, since the concerto was not a form he really cultivated at any period of his life. But from his first years in the Esterházy household come his two cello concertos, his five violin concertos, a double-bass concerto, and two horn concertos. Nor in his flattery of the orchestra did he restrict himself to concertos. The frequent instrumental solos in his symphonies of the period would have been enough to make players love him even if he hadn't been such a lovely man, and some of the horn writing makes it plain that the Esterházy orchestra included some of the finest horn players of the time.

13 **Symphony No. 72 in D (Mvt 1: Allegro)**

14 The first movement of the Symphony No. 72 in D. And that's the end of CD 1.

CD 2

1 Only eight and a half months after Haydn had joined the household, Prince Paul Anton died. He was succeeded by his brother Nicolaus, who as it happens was still more cultivated and musical, and an instrumentalist of professional calibre. With one fleeting exception, relations between Haydn and his new patron prince were exceptionally good, and Nicolaus was in no doubt either of Haydn's gifts or of the added lustre he gave to the Esterházy court. Nevertheless, he was a demanding employer, and Haydn was badly overworked. In the first four years or so of his service at court, he managed to complete, in addition to all the other calls on his attention, time and energies, some thirty symphonies, a dozen string quartets, a large number of piano trios and piano sonatas, mostly written for his aristocratic pupils in the Esterházy family, and various other things to boot.

On top all of this came a demand which Haydn could hardly have anticipated. As it happens, the Prince was passionately fond of playing a quaint old-fashioned instrument (old-fashioned even then) called the baryton – a development of the old viola da gamba which rested on the player's knees and was extremely difficult to play. Since the repertoire for such a dinosaur was unsurprisingly small, Haydn had to make up for it by composing a vast amount of music which only the Prince would ever play. This included 125 divertimentos and twelve other works, which required a horrified Haydn not only to write for the instrument but to learn how to play it – and play it well enough to join the Prince in duets. This was emphatically not a task he particularly enjoyed, but it did enhance his joy in composition.

HAYDN: I had to keep reminding myself that such fame as I had now harvested was not at all as a practising virtuoso but as a Kapellmeister. I was ashamed that I had largely neglected composing for well nigh half a year, and when I resumed in earnest, it was with renewed vigour.

Nevertheless, after two years of service Haydn was suffering from almost continuous strain, as evidenced, in part, by the record of medicines he was taking. But the stress

arose more from his diplomatic and administrative activities than from his musical assignments. In addition to recruiting new players for the orchestra, maintaining the upkeep of all the instruments, ordering new parts, new strings, and occasionally new instruments, doing all the accounts, managing the bills and so on, he had to keep order amongst his troops, as it were, addressing all personal grievances, dealing with all misdemeanours, however small – and, most difficult of all, representing his staff in any differences between them and the Prince.

While Haydn was unfailingly respectful, he was never cowed by his employer and stood up to him even in the most controversial of circumstances – as when a certain flautist, one Franz Sigl, went shooting and accidentally set the roof of a house on fire. If it hadn't been put out as quickly as it was, it could have led to a major catastrophe, possibly engulfing the whole town in flames. Such things were all too easily possible in those days. As we'll see, it happened to Haydn three times. Naturally enough, the Prince had the man arrested and dismissed. In this he was materially supported by his faithful Estates Manager, or Regent, Ludwig von Rahier – a former military man, like the Prince himself. To the astonishment of both men, Haydn vigorously interceded on Sigl's behalf, sharply criticising Rahier's behaviour. The Prince responded with a stern rebuke, but Haydn stood his ground.

HAYDN: Serene highness and Noble Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, gracious and Dread Lord!

I have received with every submissive and dutiful respect Your Illustrious and Serene Highness's letter addressed to me, and I see from it that your Highness has taken it very amiss that I protested against the detention of flute player Franz Sigl to Herr von Rahier, whose commands I am now admonished to follow, in order that I may behave better in the future, on penalty of the dread displeasure of my Serene Highness.

Most Serene Highness! Gracious Lord! On behalf of the above-named flute player, because of whom the fire started, I went with the whole band to Herr von Rahier, but not on account of the detention itself. It was against the *rudeness* of the detention and the harsh treatment of the subject that I protested

– but with all due respect – to Herr von Rahier. However, we could get nowhere with the administrator, and I even had to put up with his slamming the door in my face. He likewise addressed all the others in the most abusive terms and threatened *everyone* with detention. Similarly, this very day Friberth fled excitedly from the Regent's passion (on account of not doffing his hat, which must have been an oversight), and does not dare to come home, because this same Regent pretends that the first-mentioned Friberth was rude to him, and that therefore he will mete out his own punishment. But I testify, as do all the other musicians, that Friberth did nothing else except, when the Regent threatened all of us with detention – and without any reason – he said he had no other master but His Serene Highness, Prince Esterházy. I myself told the Regent to complain to Your Serene and Illustrious Highness if he felt his own person to have been insulted, but I was given the answer that the Regent is his own judge and will mete out the punishment himself. Everyone is very upset on this account, these honourable men find this treatment very unfair and hope that Your Serene and Gracious Highness's intentions certainly do not extend this far, and that for this reason you will graciously put a stop to such exercises of power whereby anyone can be his own judge without differentiating between guilty and not guilty.

The orders of the oft-mentioned Regent (as Your Serene and Gracious Highness knows anyway) have been correctly carried out at all times, and as often as I receive through him an order of Your Serene and Illustrious Highness, I shall always execute it to the best of my ability; if therefore the Regent has complained in this regard, it must be the result of his angry pen. But moreover Your Serene and Illustrious Highness must yourself remember, in your graciousness, that I cannot serve two masters, and cannot accept the commands of, and subordinate myself to, the administrator, for Your Serene and Illustrious Highness once said to me: 'Come first to me, because I am his Master'.

But in his heart of hearts His Serene and Illustrious Highness knew perfectly well that where music at court was concerned, there was only one true master.

2 Cello Concerto in C major, Hob. VIIb:1 (Mvt 3: Allegro molto)

3 The finale from Haydn's Cello Concerto No. 1 in C.

As it turned out, Haydn's row with Rahier was just a harbinger of greater storms to come. Despite the Prince's genuine admiration and liking for Haydn, or perhaps, actually, because of it, things now proceeded from bad to worse on the diplomatic front. And this time it was Haydn himself who was figuratively in the dock. The old Kapellmeister Werner, still Haydn's superior in court ranking, had lost all sympathy with his headstrong deputy, and found his music, too, disagreeable and strange. But his quarrel with Haydn wasn't confined to matters of taste, as he made very plain in an outspoken, a blistering, letter to the Prince:

WERNER: High Born Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, Gracious and Dread Lord!

I am forced to draw attention to the gross negligence in the local castle chapel, the unnecessarily large princely expenses, and the lazy idleness of the whole band, the principal responsibility for which must be laid at the door of the present director, who lets them all get away with everything, so as to receive the name of a good Haydn; for as God is my witness, things are much more disorderly than if the seven children were about; it seems that there are only libertines among the chorus people, who according to their fancy take their recreation for five or even six weeks at a time: the poor chapel thus has only five or six at a pinch, also not one of them pays attention to what his neighbour is playing. Over half the choir's instruments are lost, and they were collected only seven years ago, after many requests, from the late lamented Prince. Apart from all that, now most of the church music itself goes out to all the world; the cabinet with the music, however, has been considerably depleted. It is humbly requested: Your Princely Highness should give him a severe order that he must issue the strictest command to the princely musicians that they appear in the future, all of them without exception, at their duties. And because it is likely that he, Haydn, will try to lie his way out of it, the order must come from on high.

Werner may have been old and embittered, but many of his charges were probably justified. Haydn was tired and over-worked, but he was also naturally easygoing, convivial and sympathetic to a fault for someone in his position, and the rigorous disciplining of others did not come easily to him. It's likely, too, that the catalogue and condition of the music itself left a good deal to be desired. It's quite possible that some of the manuscripts were lent and never returned. Anyway, Prince Esterházy seems to have taken this outburst with a grain of salt – but not without a formal rebuke.

OFFICIAL: To Haydn. Draft of an Order from Prince Nicolaus Esterházy.

ESTERHÁZY: Inasmuch as the musicians of the Eisenstadt Castle Chapel have produced a great disorder in the choir-loft, because of indolence and carelessness, and have neglected the instruments through poor care and storage, Vice-Kapellmeister Haydn is herewith earnestly enjoined, firstly to prepare an inventory, in three identical copies, of all the instruments and music in the choir-loft, according to the enclosed formulae, with indication of the composers, numbers of parts, etc., to sign it and within eight days from today to deliver one to us, the second to the book-keeper's office, and the third to the choir-loft; secondly, the schoolmaster Joseph Diezl is to collect and distribute the necessary music before each choir service, and after the service to collect it and to see that it is properly returned to the cupboards wherein it belongs, locked, so that nothing will be removed or lost; thirdly, to see to it that the schoolmaster keeps all the choir instruments constantly in good repair and in proper order, to which end said schoolmaster is ordered to appear in the choir-loft one quarter of an hour before each service; fourthly, to take especial pains that all the members of the chapel appear regularly at the church services and fulfil their duty and obligations in a proper and disciplined fashion; fifthly, in our absence to hold two musical academies [concerts] each week in the Officers' Room at Eisenstadt, viz., on Tuesdays and Thursdays from two to four o'clock in the afternoon, which is to be given by all the musicians, and in order that sixthly, to assure that in future no one is absent without permission from the church services or the above-mentioned academies (as was the case

hitherto), a written report will be delivered to us every fortnight, with the name of, and reason for, anyone presuming to absent themselves from duty.

And with that, the matter was officially resolved. Everyone cooled down and things returned to normal – in terms of personal relations, anyway. But there was a true catastrophe in the offing, and a terrifying reminder of how serious the flautist Sigl's careless shooting could have been.

On 2 August, 1768 a great fire destroyed a large part of the town. The area where Haydn lived was particularly devastated. The monastery and the nunnery on his street were completely gutted, indeed only nineteen houses in the lower part of town survived. As well as his furniture and household goods, many of Haydn's scores were reduced to ashes. Nothing could replace that loss, but the Prince had the house rebuilt at his own expense.

Haydn's pace of working, the sheer range and number of his duties, would have felled many an able man in his tracks, but this composer seemed to have the constitution of an ox. Even he, though, was prey now and again to exhaustion and lowered resistance, and in 1770 he fell seriously ill, with a high fever. The doctor strictly forbade him, for the duration of his convalescence, to occupy himself with music. But, as Griesinger rather suggests, you might as well ask the wind not to blow.

GRIESINGER: Soon after the doctor's edict, Haydn's wife went out to church, leaving strict instructions with the maid that on no account was she to let her master go near the piano. Haydn, in bed, pretended to hear nothing of this order, but hardly had his wife left than he sent the maid out on some errand. No sooner had she gone than he rushed to his piano. At the first touch the idea for a whole sonata came to him, and the first section was finished while his wife was still in church. When he heard her returning, he hastily retreated to his bed, and there, unbeknownst to her, he wrote the rest of the sonata.

4 Piano Sonata L. 33 in C Minor, Hob. XVI:20 (Mvt 1: Moderato)

5 Part of the great C minor Sonata, written in 1770.

Now Haydn had already written some wonderful piano sonatas, but it was with that one that he took a giant leap forward from excellence to greatness. In its degrees of nuance, its emotional depth and psychological weight, and its particularly idiomatic use of the piano, this work marked something new not only in Haydn's piano music but in the history of the classical sonata itself. You could almost say that with that piece Beethoven became possible. But the C minor Sonata was no fluke. It was part of a sudden spurt of growth, an eruption into the foreground of a genius that until the last two or three years had shown itself more in promise than in fulfilment. Much of the music he wrote at around this time had a new intensity, a dramatic power and a dark, turbulent energy that's had historians, musicologists, psychologists struggling to account for it. Nothing that we know about the circumstances of his life suggests any great trauma or emotional crisis. Many people have drawn parallels with the romantic *Sturm und Drang* (the 'Storm and Stress') movement in German literature, but Haydn's 'Sturm und Drang' works predate his first encounter with the German movement, and in any case his acquaintance with literature in general was very slim at the best of times. Outside music, he was not a deeply cultured man. His very modest library consisted of little more than the Bible and various technical treatises on music. But the romantic ardour, even passion, of his music at this period suits the 'Sturm und Drang' label to a T.

6 **Symphony No. 45 in F sharp minor ('Farewell', Mvt 1: Allegro assai)**

7 The opening movement of Symphony No. 45 in F sharp minor – the only symphony, as far as I know, ever written in that key.

Although much of Haydn's music from the early 1770s has been described as 'romantic' in its expression, it would be a great mistake to think that it was even mostly full of 'Sturm und Drang'. The most important thing about the music of this period isn't its mood or its character but its sheer quality. And though the growth in stature of both his

symphonies and his piano sonatas is indeed remarkable, it's nothing like so consistent as in his string quartets, and in particular the six quartets of Op. 20. In each one of these masterpieces Haydn achieves a combination of formal and technical mastery with a depth and range of emotional and spiritual expression which I think it's fair to say no-one in the history of music had yet achieved, with the sole exception of J.S. Bach. And strange to say, it's entirely possible, even likely, that Haydn knew none of Bach's music. For him, as for most of his musical contemporaries, Bach meant Carl Philipp Emanuel, not Johann Sebastian. But these quartets are not only great pieces of music; they represent Haydn's discovery of his own true self. They're not works that could conceivably have been composed by anyone else, and they have an eloquence – more than that, an unguarded intimacy – which borders at times on the tragic, not a characteristic with which he is generally associated, even today.

8 String Quartet in F minor, Op. 20 No. 5 (Mvt 3: Adagio)

9 Part of the slow movement from the Quartet in F minor, Op. 20 No. 5.

With the wisdom of hindsight we can fairly say that Haydn's journey from genius to true greatness would have been unthinkable without his patron prince. Relations between them, as we've seen, had to weather the occasional storm – well, squall – but on the whole they enjoyed one of the most enlightened and fruitful partnerships in the whole history of princely patronage. In many ways, not all of them intentional, Nicolaus created a unique environment in which Haydn's genius could flourish, as it might not have done in more conventional circumstances. In addition to phenomenal wealth, and extraordinary culture, the prince had a streak of eccentricity that bore some quite spectacular fruit.

By the time of his brother's death, Nicolaus had taken to spending many months of each year at a remote hunting lodge on a stretch of land near the Hungarian border which amounted to little more than a glorified swamp. It was here, in the midst of this distinctly unhealthy marshland, that he decided to build a palace whose magnificence would rival anything in Europe. And he was true to his word – at a predictably astronomical cost.

Never had mosquitoes had it so good. In summer the place was an insects' paradise, and in winter it was an icy wasteland – just about the least healthy spot he could have chosen. Needless to say, it was years before the palace was finished, complete with a fully equipped opera house and separate marionette theatre, a large picture gallery, a magnificent chapel with its full complement of clergy, and a hospital, staffed by, among others, two teams of doctors – one for the Prince and his family, the other for his servants, all of whom were accommodated within the palace grounds. But the Prince and his staff took up residence long before all these facilities were up and running.

This was not good news for Haydn. The Esterházy court, when Haydn had joined it, generally spent the summers in Eisenstadt in the south east of Austria, where Haydn had his own house, and the winters in Vienna. Haydn loved Vienna. He loved its culture, its busyness, and it was the home of his friends, like-minded people from similar backgrounds, who shared his interests and his natural sociability. Even at Eisenstadt he had felt cut off from most of this, but in the remote wetlands on the Hungarian border, icy in winter, water-logged in spring and summer, he felt (albeit luxuriously) marooned. In this, Prince Nicolaus was his polar opposite. At home in his fairytale castle, which was already being compared to Louis XIV's palace at Versailles, he treated Vienna with increasing disdain, travelling there only to pay his respects to the imperial court at Christmastime. As a result, his army of servants, like his courtiers, were often holed up from February to December in a place so remote that even the much-travelled English historian Dr Burney, who was one of Haydn's greatest admirers, gave it a miss. Only many years later, when he was an old man, did Haydn fully realise that his isolation had been in many ways his artistic salvation.

HAYDN: Not only did I have the encouragement of constant approval, but as conductor of the orchestra I could experiment, find out what made a good effect and what weakened it, so I was free to alter, improve, add or omit, and be as bold as I pleased. Cut off from the world I had no-one to bother me, and so I was forced to become original.

And become original he did, quite early on. Strange though it may seem to us today, the symphony orchestra in the 1770s, like the symphony itself, was far from standardised. For a start, it was nothing like as big as it is today. Haydn's orchestra at Esterházy at its biggest numbered about twenty-five players, and in that context, his use, for instance, of four horns, such as we've already heard, was a very bold bit of scoring indeed. In his wonderful Symphony No. 22, the so-called 'Philosopher', he dispenses with the usual oboes and uses two cors anglais instead. These are deeper-voiced cousins of the oboes, and their usage here is only one of the features that make this symphony, especially its opening movement, so hauntingly beautiful.

10 **Symphony No. 22 in E flat ('The Philosopher', Mvt 1: Adagio)**

11 The opening movement of the Symphony No. 22 in E flat, nicknamed 'The Philosopher'.

In some of these earlier symphonies Haydn uses a flute, but for the most part he writes for two oboes, bassoon, two horns and strings. When the work was for some specially grand or festive occasion, he also added trumpets – but it was a long time before these became standard.

However well Haydn adjusted to his new life (and he was good at making the best of most things), it must have been a real hardship for a man of his convivial temperament to be so isolated. True, he was one of the few musicians to be allowed married quarters, but that was cold comfort. His wife was no companion to him – nor he to her, it has to be said – and he was specifically forbidden, remember, by contract, to become too friendly with the other musicians. Outside music, he had few interests – his education, after all, had been highly specialised from his boyhood – and he wasn't naturally at ease with the nobility. Nor would they have wanted him to be. Characteristically, he tried to develop other interests, but as Griesinger hints, there was more will than pleasure in it.

GRIESINGER: Hunting and fishing were Haydn's principal pastimes during his long stay in Hungary, and he never forgot that he once brought down with

one shot three hazel-hens, which appeared on the table of the Empress Maria Theresa. Another time he aimed at a hare, but only shot off his tail, though at the same time he managed to kill a pheasant that happened to be close by; his dog, however, was less fortunate. In pursuit of the abbreviated hare, it strangled itself in a snare. In riding, Haydn developed no skill, because after he had fallen from a horse on the Morzin estates, he never again trusted himself to mount. Even Mozart, who liked riding horseback for exercise, was always made fearfully anxious by it.

Haydn's constant concern for his musicians at Eisenstadt and Eszterház reached a kind of climax in the year 1772. On 9 January we find him writing to the princely secretary, Anton Scheffstoss, one of the officials who was in more or less constant communication with the Prince – unlike Haydn, who would have had to arrange a formal interview for each individual request.

HAYDN: Eisenstadt, 9th January, 1772.

Nobly born and highly respected Monsieur Scheffstoss,

You have my grateful thanks for all your kind efforts on behalf of my wishes, the fulfilment of which is the result of your intercession for me. I would have thanked you long ago and acknowledged my indebtedness, if it were not, and had not been, prevented by illness. Dearest Monsieur Scheffstoss, please also help Marton Marteau through your kindness to get the 6 cords of wood, 30 lbs. of candles, and 30 gulden lodging money which should be his, and which His Highness promised me to give him; the mistake in this case lies in his contract, according to which he is to receive the same allowance as Lidl, although even in Lidl's contract there is no mention of the 30 lbs. of candles (which, I assure you on my honour, His Highness agreed to grant him). Apart from this please present my respectful compliments to your wife and the Weigl family (to whom I shall write shortly), and to all other good friends. And I remain, with all respect, noble Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Joseph Haydn.

The letter got almost instantaneous results. On 14 January the Prince issued a decree granting the desired items to Marteau. Meanwhile, though, there was a small but ominous little note from the Regent Rahier to the Prince:

RAHIER: Eisenstadt, 10th January, 1772.

I have communicated to all the musicians by word of mouth your high order of the 8th, that none of the wives and children of the musicians except for the wives of Haydn, Friberth, Dichtler, Cellini and Tomasini are to be allowed to be seen at Eszterház, and there was no one who did not agree to the terms of that high order.

For all its grandeur, the main problem at Eszterház was lack of space. If the Prince were to have a regular season of a dozen actors and actresses, there'd hardly be room for all the wives and children of the musicians as well. So for the duration of their duties at Esterház the musicians were forcibly separated from their families – not a situation conducive to the highest morale. As this was a delicate matter, Haydn chose to present it to the Prince in a singularly delicate manner. At the end of the F sharp minor Symphony, some of which we heard a moment ago, he wrote a surprise postscript, as it were, in which, one by one, the musicians are instructed to blow out their candles and walk out, until no-one is left but the two principal violinists, who bring the work to its unexpectedly quiet and gentle close.

12 **Symphony No. 45 in F sharp minor ('Farewell', Mvt 4: closing Adagio)**

13 The ending of what for obvious reasons is known as the 'Farewell' Symphony.

Happily, the Prince took the hint, and announced that the entire court would return to Eisenstadt the next day. Never have music and diplomacy been so neatly, or so sweetly married.

Once back in Eisenstadt, it can hardly have occurred to anyone that the tragic scenes of the great fire would be re-enacted, but so they were. And this time the damage was still

worse. In 1776, a mere eight years after the earlier holocaust, the town was transformed into an inferno which in the space of two hours consumed the Franciscan church and monastery, the brewery, the parish church and a hundred and four houses, leaving sixteen people dead. And again an unknown number of Haydn's scores went up in smoke. Since he was now spending more time away from Eisenstadt than in it, Haydn decided in 1778 to sell his house and transfer all his belongings and papers to Esterházy. Within a year of his move, a report appeared, among other places, in the *Pressburger Zeitung*. It read as follows:

REPORTER: From Eszterházy we receive the unpleasant news that last Thursday the 18th, at 3:30 a.m., a dreadful fire broke out in the world-famous Chinese ballroom, which because of its magnificence, taste and comfort was so admired by all visitors. As a result, the adjoining water works with the tower, and the theatre, which was so excellently appointed and which contained not only a grand box for the Prince but also two comfortable side-boxes for the other guests, were entirely destroyed. The fire was dreadful to behold and glowed now and again the next day, because the ball-room was mostly painted with varnish and in the theatre was stored a large quantity of wax lights. The fire must have burned in the roof for some hours, because the whole of the valuable roof was in flames, and also the beautiful walls were almost consumed by the time the fire was discovered. The damage, according to several eye-witnesses, is estimated to be more than 100,000 gulden. Two beautiful clocks; the magnificent theatrical costumes; all the music collected at great effort and expense; the musical instruments, including the beautiful harpsichord of the famous Kapellmeister Haydn and the concert violin of the virtuoso Tomasini, were also lost to the flames.

In this third catastrophe Haydn, who lost yet more works, evidently many of them, must have begun to wonder whether he was labouring under some kind of jinx. The Prince, for his part, had no time for such thoughts. Within a month a new theatre had been built, and Esterházy Theatrical Enterprises was back in business. In time to celebrate this memorable event, Haydn completed a new symphony whose extraordinary finale is a kind of programmatic reference to the fire. It begins, in the minor mode, with a depiction

of the raging flames, but finishes in the major, suitably reflecting the happy event for which it was composed.

14 **Symphony No. 70 in D (Mvt 4: Allegro con brio)**

15 The finale of Symphony No. 70 in D. And that's the end of CD 2.

CD 3

1 Today we tend to associate Haydn with three main branches of the repertoire – the symphony, the string quartet and the piano sonata – and, I suppose, at a somewhat lower level of importance, we should also include the piano trio. But though he wrote well over a hundred symphonies, more than eighty string quartets, and at least sixty-two piano sonatas, a major part of his life with the Esterházy was devoted to vocal music – both sacred and secular. He wrote numerous masses, cantatas and other religious choral works, and he was heavily involved in opera – not just composing it (he wrote more than twenty) but producing, directing and conducting it.

Between 1775 and 1790 Haydn was responsible for no fewer than eighty-eight new operatic productions. The number of operas staged in a year was variable, ranging on the whole from twelve to fifteen, but in 1786 it reached the astonishing total of eighteen. In 1780 there were almost a hundred performances, including four world-premieres and the revival of four operas from earlier seasons. Haydn was in charge of every one, coaching the singers individually, conducting all the rehearsals, and supervising the orchestral material as well as directing the actual performances. Not only that, he frequently composed replacement arias whenever he thought the originals unworthy. Yet today, only a handful of Haydn's masses, and still fewer operas, are known to non-specialist music-lovers. Ask the average concert-goer or home-listener to name a single one of Haydn's operas and the chances are they won't be able to. Yet these works contain some of his best and most unbuttoned music – none more so than the splendid *La fedeltà premiata*, whose first act ends like this:

2 **La fedeltà premiata (Act One: Finale – ‘Aiutatemi, son morta’; ‘Ah, che duolo disperato’)**

3 Among the youngest of the musicians in the Esterházy household was an Italian mezzo-soprano, twenty-eight years Haydn’s junior, who had joined the establishment at nineteen, along with her elderly, consumptive violinist husband and their two-year-old son. Luigia Polzelli was a very minor singer, and Haydn gave her correspondingly minor parts in the operas he staged. But he spent a disproportionately large amount of time coaching her. What began as a purely professional association soon blossomed into a fully fledged affair, and it’s widely believed, by the most eminent authorities, that Haydn was the father of her second son. In any case he kept her regularly supplied with money to the end of his life and left her an annuity in his will. Needless to say, the affair did nothing to bolster his own unhappy marriage, but his wife, too, soon found solace in the arms of another, in this case the young court painter Ludwig Guttenbrunn.

Far the most important new acquaintance of this period, though, occurred not at court but in Vienna, where the Esterházy musicians were contributing to festivities surrounding an important state visit. It was there that Haydn first met Mozart, then a young man of twenty-five whose music, in all likelihood, he had not yet heard. It was the beginning of what was probably the closest friendship ever forged between two composers of comparable greatness. Each regarded the other as the greatest of living composers, and each enriched the music of the other. When circumstances allowed it, Haydn often came to Mozart’s house to play string quartets. Haydn’s string quartets were a revelation to Mozart, and fundamentally affected his own. In the six great quartets inspired by (and dedicated to) Haydn, Mozart achieved a level of originality and genius unprecedented even in his prodigious output, certainly where chamber music is concerned.

4 **Mozart: String Quartet in C, K. 465 (‘Dissonance’, Mvt 1: Adagio–Allegro)**

Part of the Quartet in C, K. 465, the so-called 'Dissonance' Quartet – one of the six which Mozart wrote in honour of Haydn.

'To my dear friend Haydn,' Mozart wrote at the top of his now famous dedication:

MOZART: To my dear friend Haydn.

A father who had determined on sending his sons out into the great world, felt himself obliged to entrust them into the care and guidance of a man who enjoyed the greatest fame, and who happened also to be his best friend. In similar fashion I send these six sons of mine to *my* most renowned and highly valued friend. They are the result of a long and laborious toil; but many friends have encouraged me to believe that this toil will be in some degree rewarded, and that these children may one day be a source of consolation to me. But from this moment I transfer to you all rights over them. I entreat you, however, to look with indulgence on those defects which may have escaped the too-partial eye of a father, and in spite of these to continue in your generous friendship towards one who so highly appreciates it.

Haydn, for his part, was appalled at Mozart's precarious financial circumstances and did all he could to help. When he was asked to provide a new opera for Prague he declined, but proposed that the commission be given to Mozart instead.

HAYDN: If I could only impress on the soul of every friend of music, and on high personages in particular, how inimitable are Mozart's works, how profound, how musically intelligent, how extraordinarily sensitive! (for this is how I understand them, how I feel them) – why then the nations would vie with each other to possess such a jewel within their frontiers. Prague should hold him fast – but should reward him, too: for without this, the history of great geniuses is sad indeed, and gives but little encouragement to posterity to further exertions; and unfortunately this is why so many promising intellects fall by the wayside. It enrages me to think that this incomparable Mozart is not yet engaged by some imperial or royal court! Forgive me if I lose my head: but I love the man so dearly.

And so he did. That said, though, he himself was finding that service at a royal court could be very much a mixed blessing – and thereby hangs a tale, indeed another quartet.

5 String Quartet in F, Op. 55 No. 2 (Mvt 4: Finale: Presto)

6 That music comes from what is almost certainly the most generous tribute ever paid to the art of the knife-grinder. But then, as we know, Haydn was an uncommonly generous man. One day in Vienna, he was visited by an English music publisher who arrived early to find the great man painfully engaged in the act of shaving. Haydn, like all good workmen, was not above cursing his tools, and daubing his wounds he confessed to his caller, one John Bland, that he'd happily give his best string quartet in exchange for a decent razor. 'Done!' cried Bland, and disappeared. When he returned it was with razor in hand. Haydn kept his word, and Bland went back to England a happy man. His reason for being in Vienna at all had been to approach Haydn with an offer from the London-based concert organiser, Johann Peter Salomon, whose greatest desire, as an entrepreneur, was to bring the most famous of living composers to England. But Haydn in this case was not a free agent. For all his eminence, he was still another man's servant.

So Bland and Salomon failed in their mission – this time, but the idea of getting Haydn to England had been afoot for some years. His music had been known and played there to great acclaim for many years, and in 1782 he'd written three symphonies, Nos 76 to 78, specifically for London. Paris was similarly favoured. In fact the six symphonies he wrote for Paris in 1786 are the first in an almost unbroken chain of masterpieces which culminated in his last symphony of all, No. 104, nine years and nineteen symphonies later. He was equally in demand in Germany, Italy and Spain. But while he was more than happy to send his music abroad, loyalty to his Prince kept the man himself at home. As we learn from his friend and biographer, the painter Albert Dies:

DIES: He swore to the Prince to serve him till one or the other of them should die, and proclaimed that not even the offer of millions could tempt him away, even for a little time, without the full consent and approval of the Prince.

And Haydn was a man of his word. There *had* been invitations that he would have loved to accept, but the Prince withheld his permission.

HAYDN: ...and his refusals were always couched in terms of such extreme politeness that I never had the heart to press the matter further.

So, Haydn stayed at Esterházy and busied himself writing things like this:

7 **Symphony No. 88 in G (Mvt 4: Finale: Allegro con spirito)**

8 The finale of the Symphony No. 88 in G.

By now Haydn was generally held, throughout Europe, to be the greatest living composer (his only rivals at this point being Gluck, who confined himself to opera, and Mozart, who was still a young man, in his early twenties). And of course the more his fame grew, the more public curiosity about the man himself grew with it. In England, it reached such a pitch that one London newspaper actually proposed that the British should take the initiative and kidnap him.

GAZETTEER: There is something very distressing to a liberal mind in the history of Haydn. This wonderful man, who is the Shakespeare of music, and the triumph of the age in which we live, is doomed to reside in the court of a miserable German Prince, who is at once incapable of rewarding him, and unworthy of the honour. *Haydn*, the simplest as well as the greatest of men, is resigned to his condition, and in devoting his life to the rites and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church, which he carries even to superstition, is content to live immured in a place little better than a dungeon, subject to the domineering spirit of a petty Lord, and the clamorous temper of a scolding wife. Would it not be an achievement equal to a pilgrimage for some aspiring youths to rescue him from his fortune and transplant him to Great Britain, the country for which his music seems to be made?

Well, no ‘aspiring youths’ volunteered to do the deed, and Haydn remained at Esterházy. It would be easy, especially in view of his many generous statements about the Prince, to think that that newspaper item was being melodramatic and sensationalist in its reference to dungeons and such like – and so it may have been. But the fact is that as the years wore on and the Prince grew old, Haydn, who wasn’t getting any younger himself, did indeed feel incarcerated. As he wrote from Esterházy to one of the great friends of his later years, Marianne von Genzinger:

HAYDN: Well, here I sit in my wilderness – forsaken – like a poor waif – almost without any human society, melancholy, full of the memories of past glorious days – yes! past alas! – and who knows when those days shall return again? Those wonderful parties! Where the whole circle is one heart, one soul, all those beautiful musical evenings – which can only be remembered, and not described – where are all those enthusiastic moments? – all gone – and gone for a long time. Your Grace mustn't be surprised that I haven't written up to now to thank you. I found everything at home in confusion, and for three days I didn't know if I was *Kapellmeister* or *Kapellservant*. Nothing could console me, my whole house was in confusion, my piano which I usually love so much was perverse and disobedient – it irritated rather than calmed me, I could only sleep very little, even my dreams persecuted me; and then, just when I was happily dreaming that I was listening to the opera, *Le nozze di Figaro*, that horrible North wind woke me and almost blew my nightcap off my head; I lost twenty pounds in weight in three days, for the good Viennese food I had in me disappeared on the journey; alas! alas! I thought to myself as I was eating in the mess here, instead of that delicious slice of beef, a chunk of a cow 50 years old; instead of a ragout with little dumplings, an old sheep with carrots; instead of a Bohemian pheasant, a leathery joint; instead of pastry, dry apple-fritters and hazelnuts – and that's what I have to eat. Alas! alas! I thought to myself, if I could only have a little bit of what I couldn't eat up in Vienna.

Here in Esterházy no one asks me: Would you like some chocolate? With milk or without? Will you take some coffee, black, or with cream? What may I offer you, my dear Haydn? Would you like a vanilla or a pineapple ice? If I only had a good piece of Parmesan cheese, especially in Lent, so that I could

more easily swallow those black dumplings and noodles; just today I told our porter here to send me a couple of pounds.

Forgive me, kindest and most gracious lady, for filling this letter with such stupid nonsense, and for killing time with such a wretched scrawl, but you must forgive a man whom the Viennese terribly spoiled. I am gradually getting used to country life, however, and yesterday I actually studied for the first time. Your Grace will certainly have been more industrious than I. The pleasing Adagio from the Quartet has, I hope, by now received its true expression from your fair fingers. My good friend Fraulein Peperl will (I hope) be reminded of her teacher by singing the Cantata frequently; she should remember to have a distinct articulation and a correct vocal production, for it would be a crime if so beautiful a voice were to remain hidden in her breast; so therefore I ask her to smile frequently, lest I be disappointed in her. Likewise I advise Monsieur François to cultivate his musical talents; even when he sings in his dressing-gown, he does very nicely. I shall often send him some new things to encourage him. Meanwhile I again kiss your hands for all your kind favours, and am, as always, most respectfully,

Your Grace's most sincere and wholly obedient servant,

Joseph Haydn

In February 1790, Princess Esterházy died. From then on, the Prince was inconsolable and would scarcely let Haydn out of his sight – except during a few days here and there when *he* was called away. But even then he forbade his prize canary to leave his golden cage.

HAYDN: Oh but it is a sad sad thing forever to be a slave, but Providence decrees it, so here I remain, poor wretch that I am! Constantly harassed with much work and hardly any leisure. And friends? What can I say? *Have* I one *real* one? No real friends are left me now – or perhaps just one: a woman. But she is far away.

In more senses than one: reading Haydn's letters to Marianne von Genzinger it's hard to avoid the feeling that he was half in love with her. But she was an aristocrat, and a married one at that, whose children he adored. The fact that he himself was childless was

an abiding sadness. Throughout his adult life he'd yearned for fatherhood and a family of his own, but it was not to be.

His days of confinement, on the other hand, were almost over. In September 1790, Prince Nicolaus died, aged seventy-six. He left Haydn a generous pension of a thousand florins a year, but the musical glory of the Esterházy court died with the Prince. His son and heir, surprisingly, was largely indifferent to music and almost immediately disbanded the orchestra. Haydn was left with his title, 'Kapellmeister to Prince Esterházy', a salary of four hundred florins, and hardly anything to do. While remaining formally in service, he was effectively free to do whatever he pleased. The first thing he did was to take up residence in Vienna, where he was almost besieged by offers, invitations and commissions. The most tempting, in some ways, was the offer of a prestigious position at the royal court in Naples – tempting because of his lifelong yearning to go to Italy. But the idea of court service, even in Italy, was not so welcome, and in any case was put right out of his head by the arrival one morning at his door of a stranger, with a purposeful air. He stated his business at once.

SALOMON: I am Salomon from London and I have come to fetch you.

And so it was that on 15 December 1790 Haydn packed his bags (in the process misplacing a symphony), said a fond farewell to his Viennese friends, and, accompanied by a proud and solicitous Salomon, made his way to Calais, where he caught his first-ever glimpse of the sea. On the threshold of his sixtieth year, he was heading for a new land, a new language, and in many respects a new life.

HAYDN: On New Year's Day, after attending early Mass, I boarded the ferry at 7.50 a.m., and at five in the afternoon arrived safe and well at Dover. During the first four hours there was scarcely any wind and the vessel made so little headway that in that time we went no further than a single English mile – and there were still twenty-four to cross. Fortunately, however, towards 11.30 such a favourable breeze began to blow that by four o' clock we'd covered all but two miles of our journey. Indeed at length a violent wind began to blow, and as

I saw the monstrous high waves rushing at us I was seized with alarm (and with a little indisposition too). But I overcame it, and during the whole passage I remained on deck so as to gaze my fill at that terrible and mighty monster, the ocean. I did not feel the fatigue of the journey until I arrived in London, and then it took two days for me to recover.

When he did recover it was only to be overwhelmed again, this time by London itself. Though Haydn's music was known in every capital city of Europe, he himself had never been beyond a relatively small section of his own country, an area considerably less than that of Wales. Small wonder then that London took his breath away. As he contemplated the scale of the place, and felt its power, as he drank in its beauties and discovered undreamt-of marvels, he felt, to use his own words, 'the most profound astonishment'. And he was hardly less astonished by the reception he got:

HAYDN: My arrival caused a sensation throughout the city and I went the round of all the newspapers for three successive days. It appears that everybody wants to know me. I have 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. Except for the nobility I admit no callers until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and at 4 o'clock I dine at home with Mr. Salomon. Yesterday I was invited to a grand concert at which Salomon, who is an excellent violinist, was the leader. I was conducted up the centre of the hall to the front of the orchestra and there, amid universal applause, I was stared at and greeted by a great number of English compliments. I was assured that such honours had not been conferred on anyone for fifty years. All this was very flattering to me, yet I wished that I could fly for a time to Vienna to have more quiet in which to work; the noise here that the common people make as they sell their wares in the street is quite intolerable.

There was a simple solution to that problem, of course, and it lay much nearer to hand than Vienna. Haydn exchanged his lodgings in the bustling centre of London for the bucolic surroundings of Lisson Grove. But he soon discovered, on a visit to the opera at

Covent Garden, that ‘the common people’, as he liked to call them (more descriptively than disparagingly), were no less inhibited in the theatre than in the street.

HAYDN: Their behaviour, here as in all the other theatres, is most impertinent. They set the fashion with all their unrestrained impetuosity, and whether a number is repeated or not is determined entirely by their yells. After the duet in the third act, which was very beautiful, the pro’s and contras went on for nearly a quarter of an hour, while the performers stood on the stage, apparently quite terrified; first coming forward, then retreating. The orchestra seemed decidedly sleepy.

At Covent Garden maybe it was, but on the whole he was greatly impressed by orchestral standards in London. Indeed it could well be said that Haydn and the London orchestras brought out the best in each other – and in their audiences.

HAYDN: At the first of Mr. Salomon's concerts, the very concerts for which I was invited here, I created a furore with a new symphony and they had to repeat the Adagio, something which, I am told, had never occurred in London before.

9 **Symphony No. 96 in D (‘The Miracle’, Mvt 1: Adagio–Allegro)**

10 Part of the Symphony No. 96 in D, with which Haydn made his official, and triumphant, London debut. The enthusiasm, according to contemporary accounts, amounted on that occasion almost to frenzy; and Haydn's second concert was attended by the Prince of Wales. The composer was deeply, touchingly and naively impressed by him.

HAYDN: The Prince of Wales is the most handsome man on God's earth. He has an extraordinary love of music and a lot of feeling, but very little money. I am more pleased at his great kindness than by any financial gain.

The Prince's kindness to Haydn was considerable. He became an unofficial patron, invited Haydn to visit, and introduced him to sundry other royalty, including the Duke of York who followed his brother's example and asked Haydn to stay for the weekend. There, in the company of the Duke, the Prince and the Duchess – the daughter of the King of Prussia –, Haydn found himself fawned upon as a great and respect-worthy celebrity: quite a turnabout for a man who had only lately sprung from a servant's livery. For the first time in sixty years, he was tasting the fruits of real independence. Nine months after his arrival in England he wrote to a friend in Vienna.

HAYDN: During the last two months, surrounded by the loveliest scenery, I have been living in the country, where I live as if I were in a monastery. I am well, thank the Lord, except for my usual rheumatism; I work hard, and when, in the early mornings, I walk in the woods, alone with my English grammar, I think of my Creator, my family, and all the good friends I have left behind. I had hoped to have the pleasure of seeing you soon but fate will have it that I remain here for another eight or ten months. And oh how sweet this freedom really is! I had, it is true, a kind Prince, but sometimes I was forced to be dependent on base souls. I often sighed for release, and now I have it. Though my mind is burdened with far more work, the realisation that I am no bondservant makes ample amends for all my toils.

And with that realisation came a new self-confidence. Far from encouraging complacency, Haydn's acclaim and increasing wealth only stimulated him to greater and more ambitious efforts. In England, with Salomon always steadfastly behind him, he wrote the twelve final symphonies which brought his orchestral work to a climax. With his last three piano sonatas he forged the way for Beethoven. Indeed the list of pieces that he wrote in, and for, England would stand as the respectable life-work of any composer, except for the fact that Haydn, of course, wasn't just any composer but a genius at the very height of his powers. It's not surprising, therefore, that he was in private a rather moodier man than his public image tended to suggest. Early in his second year in England his spirits were at variance with the outer circumstances of his life.

HAYDN: I am, I suppose, quite well; but I am almost always in an ‘English humour’, that is to say, depressed. I fear sometimes that I may never regain the good humour that was once so characteristic of me.

Well, as anyone could have told him, it was a groundless fear. Of course he regained his humour, and he soon indulged it at the expense of his delighted audience, who, after the unprecedented encore of the slow movement at that first concert, had resumed their traditionally somnolent ways. At the sixth of the now famous Salomon Concerts, Haydn unveiled another new symphony, and played one of his most celebrated jokes.

11 Symphony No. 94 in G (‘The Surprise’, Mvt 2: Andante)

12 Probably the best-known ‘surprise’ in the world (excepting, of course, the Trojan Horse), perpetrated in Haydn's Symphony No. 94.

After eighteen months in England, Haydn had lost some of his novelty value but his popularity was undiminished – and London had lost none of its charms for him.

HAYDN: On June the fourth, 1792, I was in Vauxhall where the King's birthday is celebrated. Over thirty thousand lamps were burning, but because of the severe and unexpected cold there were very few people present. The grounds and their variety are perhaps unique in the world. There are a hundred and fifty-five little dining booths in various places, most charmingly situated, each one seating six persons. There are very large avenues of trees which form a wonderful roof above and are magnificently illuminated. Tea, coffee and milk with almonds all cost nothing. The entrance fee is half a crown per person.

What Londoner today could recognise Vauxhall from that description? But before we start wringing our hands over the passing of the good old days, we might do well to browse a little further in Haydn's London diaries. He was a keen and curious observer of

English customs, and an indefatigable reporter. The loss of Vauxhall Gardens seems a small price to pay for a society in which this sort of thing no longer happens.

HAYDN: If a woman murders her husband, she is burned alive, whereas the husband who murders his wife is hanged. The punishment of a murderer is increased, when sentence has been passed on him, by the fact that his body is dissected after his death. If anybody steals £2 he is hanged; but if I should happen to trust someone with £2,000, and he carries it off to the devil, he is acquitted. Murder and forgery can never be pardoned; last year a clergyman was hanged for the latter, even though the King himself did all he could for him.

Clergymen seem generally, from Haydn's accounts, to have had a rather rough time of it.

HAYDN: When two persons of opposite sexes receive from the secular courts permission to marry, the clergyman is forced to marry them as soon as they are in the church, even if they have loved without their parents' permission; if he doesn't, the bridegroom and bride have the right, as soon as the clergyman leaves the church, to tear his robes from his body. And then the clergyman is degraded and forever disqualified.

Yet another custom which seems to have fallen into disuse. Laws and fashions come and go, but two things are traditionally held to be inevitable: death and taxes. But do Quakers, today, I wonder, deal with the latter as they did in Haydn's time?

HAYDN: When a Quaker goes to Court, he pays the doorkeeper to take off his hat for him, for a Quaker takes his hat off to no-one. In order to secure payment of the King's tax, an official goes to the Quaker's house and in his presence robs him of as much goods as represent the tax in value. When this disguised thief leaves the door with his goods, the Quaker calls him back and asks how much money he wants for the stolen things. The official demands just the amount of the tax. In this way does the Quaker pay tax to the King.

The King of the moment was George III, and Haydn's contact with him was rather closer than that of the average Quaker.

HAYDN: I met him first at a musical soir ee arranged by the Prince of Wales. The Queen too was there, with all her family, including the Duke of Orange, and nothing was played except my own compositions. I sat at the piano and the King, who hitherto would hear only Handel's music, was most attentive; he chatted to me freely and introduced me to the Queen who then showered me with compliments. They wanted me not only to play for them but to sing, and though at first I protested that my old voice was now no bigger than the tip of my finger, in the end I relented.

13 Six English Canzonettas: Piercing Eyes

14 One of Haydn's 'English Canzonettas'.

Haydn was naturally proud of the honours bestowed on him through his acquaintance with royalty, but an honour which he cherished even more was bestowed by Oxford University. He was invested with a title which he was pleased to use in later years, but nevertheless he kept a careful note of the expenses he incurred.

HAYDN: In connection with my Doctor's degree at Oxford, I had to pay one and a half guineas for having the bells rung, and a further half guinea for my robe. The trip there cost me six guineas.

He wasn't complaining, just keeping a record. Haydn was almost obsessive about prices generally, and his notebooks are generously sprinkled with them.

HAYDN: The larger lead pencils cost half a guinea each, the smaller ones five shillings and sixpence. Steel buttons are to be had for two pounds, a steel girdle for a pound and four shillings, and a steel chain for one pound eleven and six. Scissors, three shillings; a pen knife for four.

At the beginning of May, Lord Barrymore gave a ball that cost five thousand guineas. He paid a thousand guineas for a thousand peaches, two thousand baskets of gooseberries cost him five shillings a basket.

And elsewhere he notes:

HAYDN: Every canal lock costs ten thousand pounds.

No further comment appears to have been needed. Haydn's craze for statistics of every kind makes for some intriguing reading.

HAYDN: In the month of January 1792 a roasting chicken cost seven shillings, a dozen larks one crown.

When, do you suppose, did we give up eating larks? And did you know this?

HAYDN: In the year 1791 thirty-eight thousand houses were built in London and twenty-two thousand persons died. The city of London keeps four thousand carts for the purpose of cleaning the streets; of these, two thousand work each day.

Except, in that year, on 5 December.

HAYDN: On the 5th of December the fog was so thick you could spread it on bread.

Before we abandon Haydn the statistician, it should perhaps be noted that his enthusiasm was often greater than his accuracy.

HAYDN: On the 5th of November the boys celebrate the day on which the Guys set the town on fire.

Well, not quite – but let it pass. The time has come to leave the historian behind. As a social scientist, on the other hand, Haydn demands, and repays, our attention.

HAYDN: In France, the girls are virtuous and the wives are whores; in Holland the girls are whores and the wives are virtuous; in England they stay proper all their lives.

There, from the tone of it, speaks a man of the world, which we know Haydn wasn't. His authority on the subjects of Holland and France was nil, but his experience of women was considerable, if not on the whole very happy. Typical of his wife's lack of affection, tact and sensitivity was a letter which arrived on his doorstep in London, asking him to send her a sum of money with which to buy what she described as 'a widow's home'. Still in his fifties and in the most robust good health, Haydn was hardly in his dotage, and in fact outlived his chronically ailing wife by a decade. During the many unhappy years of their marriage, his love of women in general led him into a number of affairs. There's no doubt that women were strongly attracted to him, but as he said himself it can hardly have been because of his beauty. The best description we have of Haydn's appearance comes from his biographer Dies, who as a painter was used to seeing things in detail.

DIES: Haydn's exterior figure was something under medium size. The lower half of his body was too short for the upper, something commonly to be seen in small persons of either sex, but very noticeable in Haydn because he kept to the old fashion of having his trousers reach only to the hips and not above the waist. His features were fairly regular; his look was eloquent, fiery, but still moderate, kind, attractive. The features joined with the look to express dignity if Haydn was inclined to be serious; otherwise in conversation he easily assumed a cheerful, smiling countenance. Haydn had a moderately strong bone structure; the muscles were slight. His hawk's nose (he suffered much from a nasal polyp, which had doubtless enlarged this part), and other features as well, were heavily pock-marked, the nose was even seamed so that the nostrils each had a different shape. Haydn considered himself ugly, and told me of a prince and his consort who could not bear his face, 'because,' said he, 'I was too ugly

for them'. This supposed ugliness, however, was not at all basic, but simply a matter of deeply pocked skin and his brownish complexion.

The most serious (and costly) of Haydn's affairs was with Polzelli. However undeserving she may have been, Haydn felt a real and lasting affection for her, and many of his London letters are addressed to her. One, written after hearing of her husband's death, suggests that Haydn, at least, was still entertaining thoughts of eventual matrimony.

HAYDN: As far as your late husband is concerned, I tell you that Providence has done well to liberate you from this heavy yoke – and for him, too, it is better to be in another world than remain useless in this one. The poor man has suffered enough. Perhaps the time will come which we have both so often dreamt of, when *four* eyes shall be closed. Two are closed now... but the other two... well, enough of all this; it shall be as God wills it...

And he continued to write very tenderly to her, even when he realised that marriage was unlikely.

HAYDN: Oh! my dear Polzelli: you are always in my heart, and I shall never, never forget you. I shall do my very best to see you, if not this year, then certainly the next, along with your son. How I do hope that you won't forget me, and that you will write to me if you get married again, for I would like to know the name of the man who is fortunate enough to have you. Actually I ought to be a little annoyed with you, because many people wrote to me from Vienna that you had said the worst possible things about me, but God bless you, I forgive you everything, for I know you said it in love. Think from time to time about your Haydn, who esteems you and loves you tenderly, and will always be faithful to you.

When it came to writing about his wife, though, his tone was rather different.

HAYDN: My wife, that devilish beast, has written me such things that I was forced to answer her that I would never go home for the rest of my life. She is, to tell you the truth, not quite well; but with her usual sicknesses she may, if she pulls through, outlive me by many years. I suppose we shall have to leave her fate to Providence.

But Providence had plans for Haydn too, and they had nothing to do with Polzelli. His time in London was made all the brighter by his friendship (and almost certainly it was more than that) with a certain Mrs Schroeter, many of whose letters to him are copied out, in Haydn's own hand, in the second of his London notebooks.

MRS SCHROETER: My Dearest – Enclosed I send you the verses you were so kind as to lend me and I'm very much obliged to you for permitting me to take a copy of them. Pray inform me how you do, whether your headache is gone and if you slept well. I am extremely anxious about your health and hope soon to hear a good account of it. I thought you seemed a little out of spirits yesterday and I wish that I could always remove every trouble from your mind. Be assured, my dear one, that I partake with the most perfect sympathy in all your sensations. Every circumstance concerning you, my beloved Haydn, is always interesting to me. Oh I am truly anxious and impatient to see you, and I wish to have as much of your company as possible. Indeed my dearest Haydn, I feel for you the fondest and tenderest affection of which the human heart is capable.

And later:

MRS SCHROETER: My Dearest: I was extremely sorry to part with you so suddenly last night. Our conversation was particularly interesting and I had a thousand affectionate things to say to you, my heart was and is full of tenderness for you, but no language can express HALF the LOVE and AFFECTION I feel for you, you are DEARER to me EVERY DAY of my life. I am very sorry I was so dull and stupid yesterday, indeed, my Dearest, it was nothing but my being indisposed with a cold that occasioned my stupidity. I thank you a

thousand times for your concern for me, I am truly sensible of your goodness, and I assure you my Dearest One, if anything had happened to trouble me, I would have opened my heart, and told you with the most perfect confidence. Oh, how earnestly I wish to see you, how I hope you will come to me tomorrow. I shall be happy to see you both in the morning *and* the evening. God Bless you my love, my thoughts and best wishes ever accompany you, and I always am with the most sincere and invariable regard for you. Oh My Dearest I cannot be happy till I see you. If you know, do tell me, when you will come.

There are no letters from Haydn to show how far he reciprocated Mrs Schroeter's affections, but the very fact of his having copied out her letters (though it makes one wonder what happened to the originals) suggests that he returned her love. Years later, in Vienna, Haydn's biographer Dies came across these copies and asked what they were. Haydn's answer was simple, touching and informative.

HAYDN: They are letters from an English widow in London who loved me. Though she was sixty years old she was still lovely and amiable and I should in all likelihood have married her if I had been single.

By the time he was single, when that second pair of eyes finally closed, Haydn had long since returned to his homeland. But he left to posterity a token, a very precious token, of his feelings for Mrs Schroeter by writing three of his greatest piano trios for her. Her name lives on in their formal dedication and the last movement of one is now amongst the most famous, and most popular, trio movements ever written: the so-called 'Gypsy Rondo'.

[15] Piano Trio in G, Hob. XV:25 (Mvt 3: Rondo all'ongarese)

CD 4

1 Not long after his return to Austria, Haydn, now confirmed in public opinion as the greatest living composer, was approached by a short, swarthy young man from Bonn, in Germany, asking for advice about his future. He brought with him a recently written cantata, and told Haydn a little about his circumstances. At the age of seventeen, after the death of his mother, he had effectively become the head of his family. His father, a drunken and violent musician of no very great distinction, was still alive but of no use to anyone and the family was now in dire financial straits. Well, the young man could not have picked a more sympathetic mentor. Haydn was impressed with the cantata. He'd taken a lifelong interest in the young, in any case, and the added circumstances of poverty and family responsibility struck a deep chord in him. If the young man could make the necessary arrangements, Haydn would welcome him to Vienna and give him composition lessons. And so it was that Haydn became, not the last, but the greatest, teacher of Ludwig van Beethoven. Haydn spent the summer months of 1793 at Eisenstadt, taking Beethoven with him, and in the autumn he wrote to Maximilian Franz, Elector of Cologne and Beethoven's patron:

HAYDN: This young man will in time fill the position of one of Europe's greatest composers, and I shall be proud to be able to speak of myself as his teacher.

Sad to say, Beethoven would proclaim, with characteristic arrogance, that he had learned from Haydn 'precisely nothing'. But his music tells a different story.

2 Beethoven: Piano Trio in G, Op. 1 No. 2 (Finale: Presto)

3 Part of Beethoven's Trio in G major, Op. 1 No. 2 – one of three that he dedicated to his teacher Haydn.

The Vienna to which Haydn returned in 1792 was too distracted to give him the hero's welcome that he had every reason to expect, but if he was disappointed he didn't show it. The talk of the town was of coronations, royal comings and goings, and the worrying

developments in France, where the revolution was already underway. But Haydn delighted in being amongst old friends again, and it was a relief that they all spoke the same language. At the centre of his pleasure in Viennese society was the company and proximity of his beloved Marianne von Genzinger and her family – a pleasure that was shattered, early in 1793, by her unexpected death at the cruelly young age of forty-two. Nor were his spirits raised by the behaviour of the other two women in his life. His wife, according to his own report, was ‘ailing most of the time and in a perpetual bad humour’, and Luigia Polzelli was as grasping as ever of his money while evidently planning to marry another man, with whom she was almost certainly having an affair. What with one thing and another, Vienna, for the moment, had lost its charm for him, and he was only too happy to exchange it for London. As a career move it couldn't be topped. If his first visit had been a great success, his second was like a triumphal march. On the day after his first concert the *Morning Chronicle* reported:

CRITIC: This superb Concert was last night opened for the season, and with such an assemblage of talents as make it a rich treat to the true music lover. The incomparable Haydn produced a Symphony of which it is impossible to speak in common terms. It is one of the grandest efforts of art that we ever witnessed. It abounds with ideas, as new in music as they are grand and impressive; it rouses and affects every emotion of the soul. It was received with rapturous applause.

In the eighth concert of his new series, Haydn conducted the first performance of his Symphony No. 100 in G (the so-called 'Military'), which would soon be the greatest success of his entire career to date. Again, the *Morning Chronicle* was there.

CRITIC: Yet another new symphony by Haydn was performed; and the middle movement was again received with absolute shouts of applause. Encore! encore! encore! resounded from every seat: the Ladies themselves could not forbear. It is the advancing to battle; and the march of men, the sounding of the charge, the thundering of the onset, the clash of arms, the groans of the wounded, and what may well be called the hellish roar of war increase to a

climax of horrid sublimity! Which, if others can conceive, Haydn alone can execute.

4 **Symphony No. 100 in G ('Military', Mvt 2: Allegretto)**

5 The biggest event of the London season was Haydn's benefit concert on 4 May, perhaps the greatest concert of his life. At this spectacular event, two new pieces by Haydn were played for the first time: the Symphony No. 104 and the operatic *Scena di Berenice* – with some of the greatest performers in the world taking part. All in all, Haydn considered the days spent in England as the happiest time of his life. He was appreciated everywhere, whole new worlds were open to him, and through his very considerable earnings in the course of these two visits, he was at last free, if he chose, to escape the restricted circumstances of the court musician. His English friends remembered him with undiminished affection many years after his death, and were proud of their part in his 'liberation', as they saw it. Dr Burney, for instance, wrote in Rees's *Cyclopaedia* long after Haydn's death:

BURNEY: It is well known how much he contributed to our delight, to the advancement of his art, and to his own fame, by his numerous productions in this country, and how much his natural, unassuming and pleasing character, exclusive of his productions, endeared him to his acquaintances and to the nation at large.

When Haydn returned to Austria after all this, it was perhaps as the greatest celebrity in musical history up to that time. His only rival for the title would have been Handel.

Although still formally a servant of the Esterházy family, Haydn now became a familiar and much-loved figure on the concert platform, radiating charisma, authority, charm and humility in equal measure, and introducing the Viennese to his latest symphonies for London. And their response was positively rapturous.

In 1797 Vienna's most exclusive and prestigious music society, which had spurned him in earlier years, made up for its previous discourtesy by flouting long tradition and electing him an honourable life member. In response, Haydn threw himself body and soul into the society's affairs. He attended committee meetings whenever circumstances allowed it, and he favoured the society with the first performances of some of his greatest works, most notably his two magnificent oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.

Meanwhile, on the Esterházy front, some things had markedly improved while others had badly deteriorated. The new Prince Nicolaus was a poor shadow of his namesake and predecessor, and had none of the latter's natural tact and grace. As we know, he had little interest in music, and he and Haydn were continually at odds over one thing or another – but it has to be said that the Prince was in a difficult and unusual situation. Here he had inherited not only an enormous fortune but an old and much loved family retainer, whose fame and popularity alone, never mind genius, far outstripped his own. He could hardly sack him, which he'd probably like to have done, but nor could he allow himself to be upstaged. He persisted in addressing Haydn in the third person, which was a custom exclusively reserved for servants, and would even make musical criticisms, which unlike his predecessors he was quite unqualified to do. On such occasions, Haydn was not one to tug the forelock.

HAYDN: That, Your Highness, is *my* business, not yours.

On the plus side, for Haydn and practically everyone else, was the fact that Esterház had been abandoned to the marsh birds of southern Hungary, the Prince now dividing his time between Eisenstadt and Vienna, as of old: Eisenstadt in summer, Vienna in winter. Haydn's duties had dwindled to little more than the writing of an annual mass during the summer and the overseeing of music for various festive occasions. He was also happy to delegate many of his courtly responsibilities to others. When he wasn't composing, he enjoyed socialising with his staff and the locals, and felt pleasure but not nostalgia in remembering the grandeur of his London life.

In Vienna, Haydn was a star, and there was little the Prince or anybody else could do to alter that. He was also the first front-rank musical performer who repeatedly mounted major concerts for charity – and during the French Revolutionary Wars, there was no shortage of the sick, the poor and the wounded, who stood in need of all the help they could get. But when Napoleon entered Austria and advanced on Vienna in 1796, war found a place in Haydn's music itself: in the so-called 'Kettledrum Mass', and more lastingly and famously in the *Emperor's Hymn*. This remains Germany's national anthem to this day and has found its most exalted immortality as the basis of a movement in one of Haydn's greatest string quartets.

6 String Quartet in G, Op. 76 No. 3 (Mvt 2: Poco adagio, cantabile)

7 Part of the so-called 'Emperor' Quartet, Op. 76 No. 3 – just one in a treasury of great quartets which poured from Haydn's pen during the late 1790s.

Thanks to Haydn, Austria had far and away the best national anthem in the world, but music has never yet won a war. In the Autumn of 1797 Napoleon triumphed, and Austria signed the humiliating Treaty of Campo Formio in October of that year.

By that time, Haydn was deep in the composition of a work which was to score an even greater success with the public than his symphonies. His oratorio *The Creation* is in many ways analogous to Handel's *Messiah* – or at least there are many connections between them. Both are the single, biggest runaway hits of very great and extraordinarily prolific composers, both are oratorios of course, and *The Creation* owes a lot of its inspiration to Haydn's exposure to Handel's oratorios in England – *The Messiah* being very much the main one. The idea for *The Creation* came to fruition thanks to one man, Baron van Swieten, who introduced both Haydn and Mozart to the works of Handel and J.S. Bach – and to *The Messiah* in particular (Mozart even made his own orchestration of the entire work). It appears that shortly before leaving England Haydn had been given, by Salomon, an English oratorio text, originally meant for Handel and based on the creation section of John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*. Haydn, touched as he was by the gift,

didn't think he was up to setting a major text in English, but this problem was resolved when Baron van Swieten offered to translate it into German. He also saw to the expenses of the first performance, through a subscription scheme, and arranged a fee to help Haydn during the composition. Haydn had dedicated almost every one of his major works to the glory of God, and had already written a large amount of sacred music, but from the word go *The Creation* was a special case. And it only intensified his already fervent Christian faith.

HAYDN: I was never so devout as when I was composing *The Creation*. Every day I fell on my knees begging God to give me the strength to accomplish the work successfully. One moment I was ice-cold all over, the next I was burning up. More than once I feared I should have a stroke.

But he didn't. Instead, he produced some of the most original and visionary music ever written, none more so than the still modern-sounding 'Representation of Chaos' which opens the work, depicting the condition of things before the Creation took place.

8 The Creation ('Die Vorstellung des Chaos' – 'The Representation of Chaos')

9 When the day of the first performance came there were traffic jams in Vienna as the rich, the famous, and the intellectual and cultural elite converged on the Schwarzenberg Palace in the Neuer Markt, where the crowds were such that eighteen mounted guards and a dozen policemen were on hand to keep order.

REPORTER: The orchestra, together with the chorus, consisted of some 400 persons. The whole went off wonderfully. Between the sections of the work, tumultuous applause; during each section, however, it was still as the grave. When it was over, there were calls, 'Father Haydn to the front! Father Haydn to the front!', which crowned the celebration. Finally the old man came forward and was greeted with a tumultuous ovation and with cries, 'Long live Father Haydn! Long live music!' Their imperial majesties were all present and joined in the 'bravo' calls.

Haydn can now have been in no doubt that his and the work's place in history were secure. Two more performances were arranged within two weeks of the first. And so it went. The Viennese gave every sign of being positively addicted to *The Creation*, and Haydn's celebrity seemed to grow with every passing week. But as with Handel and *The Messiah*, so the effort of composing and performing *The Creation* took its toll on Haydn's health. He didn't have a stroke, as he'd feared, but he suffered a series of feverish attacks, and never fully recovered his once-fabled energy. He was, though, now in his late sixties.

In the spring of 1799 Austria was once again at war with France, which grieved Haydn, and his wife died, which didn't. As far as we can tell, he never made a single positive remark about her, at that time or any other. As far as Luigia Polzelli was concerned, each was now free to marry the other, but neither seems any longer to have desired this. She continued to extract money from Haydn, and not only money but a written agreement that he must have signed with at least a little ambivalence.

HAYDN: I, the undersigned, promise to Signora Luigia Polzelli (in case I should consider marrying again) to take no wife other than said Luigia Polzelli, and should I remain a widower, I promise said Polzelli to leave her, after my death, a pension for life of three hundred gulden (in figures, 300 florins) in Viennese currency. Valid before any judge, I herewith set my hand and seal,
Joseph Haydn

He went on sending her money periodically, but when she married he cut her annuity by half, and that, basically, was the end of their relationship. A sad outcome for a man who had craved, more than most, the joys of family and parenthood.

In the spring of 1800 Haydn fell ill again, and at one point there were fears for his life. But he recovered, and was soon back to his old self – at least so it appeared to others. Inside, as he told his publisher, he was both struggling and fearful.

HAYDN: My affairs, alas, multiply with my years, and yet it is almost as if with the decrease in my spiritual powers, my desire and the urgency to work increase. Oh God, how much remains to be done in this wonderful art, even by such a man as I have been! The world, it's true, compliments me many times a day, even on the fire of my last works: but no-one would believe the trouble and exertion it costs me to seek it out, for on many a day my failing memory and flagging nerves wear me down so much that I sink into the most desolate state and am thus in no condition for many days afterwards to find even a single idea, until finally, emboldened by Providence, I can sit down again at the piano and there, at last, begin again to hammer away.

But it was coming progressively harder. Having produced his purpose-built masterpiece, which should have crowned his life achievement, Haydn now found himself composing not exactly a sequel but a kind of companion work: a second oratorio. After the fantastic success of *The Creation*, Baron van Swieten had come up with a new text, loosely based on another British original, *The Seasons*, by the Scottish poet James Thomson. Haydn had agreed to the plan, but in many ways his heart wasn't in it. Nor did it help that the baron insisted on the descriptive passages in the text being mirrored as exactly as possible by correspondingly descriptive passages in the music. Haydn was now too old to be attracted by musical stunts, as he saw them – he gave in to the baron's bullying but with a conscience. When he was making a piano score of the work for his publisher he remarked of a passage imitating the croaking of frogs:

HAYDN: This Frenchified trash was forced upon me.

But the fact is that he had done a good deal of musical picture-painting in *The Creation* as well. And that had given him great pleasure, even a sense of pride. Our witness is the Swedish diplomat Frederik Silverstolpe, who called on Haydn in 1797:

SILVERSTOLPE: When I entered the room I heard a parrot calling 'Papa Haydn! 'Papa Haydn!' In one of the rooms to the right, one often saw the great man with his undistinguished features getting up from his work, but also

sometimes remaining seated at it until the visitor was quite close. There it was that he showed me an aria which describes the sea moving and the waves breaking on the shores. 'You see,' he said in a joking tone, 'you see how the notes run up and down like the waves: see there, too, the mountains that come from the depths of the sea? One has to have some amusement after one has been serious for so long!' But when we arrived at the pure stream, which creeps down the valley in a small trickle, ah! I was quite enthusiastic to see how even the quiet surface flowed. I could not forbear putting an affectionate hand on the old and venerable shoulder and giving it a gentle squeeze, as he sat at the piano and sang with a simplicity that went straight to the heart.

Haydn's contrasting views on the pictorial elements in *The Seasons* were in fact shared by some of the critics, even those who generally praised the work. This one, for instance, for the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*:

CRITIC: *The Seasons* contains many passages which are great, sublime, that sweep us along like a great river and excite one to the greatest enthusiasm. But the imitation of the cock's crowing at dawn, the guns' explosion during the hunt, seem to me to be a mistaken concept of tone-painting in music, perhaps even a degradation of this divine art.

Haydn's own apparent disparagements of the work, however, were often the cause of misunderstandings, as when he proclaimed:

HAYDN: *The Seasons* is not another *Creation*; and this is the reason why: in the one the characters are angels, in the other they are peasants.

But Haydn, being of peasant stock himself, was not one to use the word as a term of abuse. In this case he was simply stating a fact, not necessarily making a value judgement. His depiction of secular, rural life in *The Seasons* is correspondingly non-angelic and quite wonderfully earthy, as in this bracing evocation of the hunt in 'Autumn':

10 The Seasons (‘Hört das laute Getön’ – ‘Hark! The mountains resound!)

11 When *The Seasons* had its first public performance, in the spring of 1801, Haydn, who conducted it, was in his seventieth year. He was already worried, as we’ve heard, that his powers were diminishing, and when he’d come to write the final section, ‘Winter’, he’d felt, by his own admission, that he was depicting the winter of his own creativity – not that there’s even a hint of decline in the chorus we’ve just heard. He’d also announced that once the work was finished he would retire, and by and large that’s what he did – certainly as far as public life was concerned. But he remained Kapellmeister to the Esterházy, and in that capacity crowned his career with two last, glorious masses. After that, he busied himself by composing often very beautiful accompaniments to Welsh and Scottish folksongs for various publishers, most notably George Thomson of Edinburgh. But even here, he tired easily and he farmed out a good deal of this work to his pupils (no small honour to them). His works were now so bankable that many publishers took to issuing other people’s compositions under Haydn’s name. This was a booming business: alongside the one hundred and seven authenticated Haydn symphonies, for instance, are a hundred and fifty spurious ones. And all the while, honours poured in from all over the place – medals, titles, diplomas, honorary degrees and so on, from the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Russia, and especially, for some reason, from France, Austria’s most persistent and aggressive enemy. The French showered on him more honours and distinctions than any other country – especially after *The Creation*, which took Paris by storm. Most amusingly to him, his modest little house in Vienna became a place of pilgrimage for travellers of every sort. Among them was the composer Carl Maria von Weber.

WEBER: I was at Haydn’s several times. Except for the weaknesses of old age, he is still cheerful and in a good humour, speaks very gladly of his day-to-day affairs, and is especially pleased to talk to pleasant young artists: the real stamp of a great man. It’s touching to see grown-up men coming to him, and how they call him Papa and kiss his hand.

Haydn had become an institution. In 1802, the year of his final mass, we find him dining in royal splendour with princes, princesses, dukes, distinguished international diplomats and men of letters, while an anonymous band of court musicians provides music in the background. The liveried son of an impoverished wheelwright had come a long, almost an inconceivably long, way. Yet the man himself, while obviously pleased, remained remarkably unaffected.

HAYDN: I have been in the company of emperors, kings and many great gentlemen, and I have received many compliments from them: but I do not wish to live on terms of intimacy with such persons and prefer to be with people of my own class.

In 1803 Haydn made his last appearance as a conductor, and with that, his professional career could be said to have ended. He was now ageing at an almost alarming rate. At Eisenstadt he retained his title but was effectively replaced by a younger man, just as he himself had replaced old Gregor Werner more than half a century earlier. But if the engine of his body and the focus of his mind were in sharp decline, his creative mind, conditioned by the habits of a lifetime, continued in over-drive – and the combination was a source of torment to him. Physically worn out, and with failing memory, his thoughts, however lucid to begin with, became increasingly confused when he attempted to develop and mould them. Despite the outer peace and comfort of his life in retirement – pottering in his garden, delighting in the sounds and visits of the neighbours' children, receiving callers during the day and playing cards in the evening with the local servants – his inner life was increasingly agitated, and he railed at the privations of old age.

HAYDN: Oh but my musical thoughts pursue me to the very point of torture! I cannot rid myself of them. They stand implacably before me, like a wall. If I am pursued by an *allegro*, my pulse races and I cannot sleep; if by an *adagio*, my heartbeat slows. Indeed my imagination plays upon me as though I were a keyboard... That's it! I – am – a living keyboard!

Only with nobody – certainly no Haydn – to control it. Often he couldn't keep a newly minted tune in his head even long enough to write it down. Towards the end, perhaps the only tune he could infallibly remember was *The Emperor's Hymn*, and he would get himself to the keyboard, or be carried there, and play it at least once, often three times, each day.

HAYDN: Then... then it all gets easier. Yes. That helps me.

Like many elderly people he became somewhat crusty and more plaintive as he became weaker and less independent, but he retained his generally benign and generous character. Typically, too, he was quicker to tears. His eyes misted over at the mere mention of Mozart's name; he berated himself for not having enough money to leave to his relations; he fretted over his medical bills (which in fact were paid for him by the Prince); and he became almost obsessive about his appearance, dressing and preening himself before every visit, as though it were a royal audience. He also grew lonelier – another curse of the aged, as their friends and relations die around them. His religious faith, though, never faltered. Certainly the fact of death held no terrors for him. Indeed, without being morbid, he craved it. As he complained to a number of his friends:

HAYDN: I'm of no use to the world anymore. I have to be waited on and tended like a child; it's really high time the Almighty called me to Himself.

He did, however, make one last appearance in public, and it was an occasion that no-one present could ever forget. In honour of his seventy-sixth birthday, the Viennese mounted a special gala performance of *The Creation*. One of his earliest biographers, his friend Giuseppe Carpani, was there.

CARPANI: On the day appointed, Haydn was borne into the Great Hall, to the sound of trumpet fanfares and tumultuous applause, and seated next to Princess Esterházy. The cream of Viennese society was there to pay a last public homage to the Father of the Symphony (as they thought him) and of the string quartet. Salieri and Haydn embraced tenderly, surrounded by cheering crowds.

Beethoven, tears streaming down his face, bent and kissed the hand of his former teacher. When the passage, 'And there was Light' was reached, Haydn raised his trembling arms to Heaven, as if in prayer to the Father of Harmony.

At the end of the First Part, it was thought advisable to take Haydn home.

CARPANI: Two robust athletes picked up the armchair in which he was seated, and amidst the greetings, the applause and the acclamations of the whole room, the harmonious man of triumph approached the stairs; but, having arrived at the doors, he made a sign to stop. The porters obeyed and turned him round to face the public; he thanked them with the usual gestures of acceptance, then, looking heavenwards, and with tears in his eyes, he blessed his children.

In 1809 war flared up once more between Austria and France, and on 11 May it reached Vienna, yet again. The bombardment was terrific, quite literally, and four shells landed near Haydn's house, one of them in his own courtyard. Yet even above the terrible din, the shaking of the windows, and the terrified shrieks of his servants, the old man's voice could be heard.

HAYDN: Do not be afraid, my children. Where Haydn is, no harm can come to you.

But harm, though not actual injury, did come to Haydn. Even as he spoke, his entire body was overtaken by a violent trembling. He returned to his bed and never again took a single step unaided.

The French, again victorious, now occupied Vienna for a second time – but on this occasion Napoleon himself ordered a guard of honour to be posted at Haydn's door. Inside, the old master was weakening fast, as we learn from his loyal valet and copyist Johann Elssler.

ELSSLER: On Saturday the 27th of May, around 8:30 in the evening, our good Papa asked to arise and get dressed as usual, but hadn't the strength, and never

left his bed again. The numbing got much worse, but so quiet and willing in everything was our dear good Papa that we were all astonished. He complained of no pains, and when we asked him how he felt, we always received the reply, 'Children, be of good cheer, I'm fine'. But he got steadily weaker. Four hours before his death he could still speak, but after that we never heard another sound from him. He remained conscious and clearly knew us ten minutes before the end, for he squeezed our Nannerl's hand, and on the 31st of May, in the early morning, five minutes before a quarter to one, our good Papa went quietly and peacefully to sleep. At his death there was no one there but me, the servants – and a neighbour, who also signed the will as a witness.

A day later he was buried. The weather was stiflingly hot, the city freshly occupied, and fear was rampant. All the theatres had been closed down, the marshals and generals had disappeared, the streets were as good as empty, and communications were severely disrupted. Among the few mourners who attended Haydn's burial was his friend Rosenbaum.

ROSENBAUM: At four o'clock in the afternoon I went with Rodler to Haydn's house. He lay in his room dressed in black, not at all distorted, and at his feet lay the honorary medals from Paris, Russia, Sweden and elsewhere. After five o'clock, Haydn was placed in an oak casket, taken to Gumpendorf church, carried around it three times, blessed and lowered into his grave. There was no funeral cortège. Not one single Kapellmeister of Vienna was there to accompany the corpse.

A fortnight later, however, a proper service of remembrance was held at the large Schottenkirche (the 'Scottish Church'). In front of the church door and inside the church itself the Viennese civil grenadiers stood watch together with the French. The church, the pews and the altar were draped in black and adorned with lamps. In attendance were the French Secretary of State, Maret, several generals, staff officers and senior officers of the French army, many other Frenchmen, and virtually a 'Who's Who' of Viennese society, almost all of them dressed in mourning. And it was there, to the music of Mozart's Requiem, that Vienna bade a formal farewell to its most beloved composer.

DIES: The Vienna public showed how highly it valued Haydn at the auction of his estate. Prince Johann von Lichtenstein paid more than fourteen hundred gulden for a parrot that Haydn had brought from England and had himself taught to speak. Everybody wanted to buy a keepsake. Even people of humble position outbid one another and scrambled for the effects as if they were a saint's relics.

There weren't many, but there was one in particular that had meant a great deal to him:

DIES: Haydn possessed a little casket filled with snuffboxes, watches, rings, medals, and other presents that he had received from the emperors and kings of Austria, Russia, Prussia, Spain, France, and Naples. 'If life sometimes seems to vex me,' he said, 'I look at all this, and feel glad to be so honoured in all Europe.'

By the time he died, much of the wealth that had come to him late in life was already gone – but not because he was a spendthrift. On the contrary:

GRIESINGER: He had few needs or earthly desires. A simple mode of life had been second nature to him from youth on, and he made it a point of honour to spend no more than the limits of his income. With a little extra money he assisted his relatives. 'I live less for myself,' I once heard him say, 'than for my poor relations, to whom I hope to leave something after my death. Today a shoemaker who wishes to marry my niece, a widow with four children, appealed to me for capital of a thousand gulden. I have promised it to him. But of course if I had lived beyond my means, this would not have been possible for me.'

But, very unusually, Haydn's story didn't end with his death, or even with his burial. Some time later, Prince Nicolaus II sought, and was granted, permission to remove Haydn's body to the cemetery at Eisenstadt. As it happens, he didn't get around to it until 1820. And then came the shock: when Haydn's body was exhumed, it was found to be

headless. The culprit turns out to have been none other than his friend Rosenbaum, who wished, ironically, to protect what he described as the master's 'venerable head' from – his word – 'desecration'. He also wanted to examine the brain and to study the skull for purposes of phrenology. In collusion with the grave digger and a contact at Vienna's main hospital, he returned to the cemetery under cover of night and had Haydn dug up, beheaded and quickly re-buried (all this and its aftermath are described in gruesomely vivid detail in his diary – not recommended reading for the squeamish). When the headless body was discovered, Prince Nicolaus offered a reward for the head's recovery. The perpetrators duly returned the skull, but the Prince broke his promise and withheld the reward. Just as well, because the returned skull turned out not be Haydn's at all. The authentic skull was eventually donated (I presume anonymously) to Vienna's Society for the Friends of Music, where it lay until 1954 (!), when it was reunited with its body, a mere one-hundred-and-forty-five years late. Fifty years earlier, it took a most unusual music lover to know more than a generous handful of Haydn's works, and it was really only in the latter half of the twentieth century that his music became widely known to concert-goers and home-listeners alike. After more than a century of lip-service, Haydn has at last been almost universally acknowledged not merely as a great composer, but as one of the greatest who ever lived. While his best-known chorus, from *The Creation*, proclaims that 'The Heavens Are Telling the Glory of God', the music itself proclaims the glory... of Haydn.

12 The Creation ('Die Himmel erzählen' – 'The Heavens Are Telling')