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## Track List

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### CD 1

#### **Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1700/01–1775)**

Symphony in D major, J-C 16

- |   |                                  |          |
|---|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Movement 1: Alla breve           | 2:10     |
| 2 | Movement 2: Andante sempre piano | 2:52     |
| 3 | Movement 3: Finale: Presto       | 1:18     |
|   | Aradia Ensemble / Kevin Mallon   | 8.557298 |

#### **Johann Stamitz (1717–1757)**

Symphony in E flat major, Op. 4 No. 6

- |   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| 4 | Movement 1: Allegro maestoso               | 3:47     |
| 5 | Movement 2: Adagio                         | 5:58     |
|   | Northern Chamber Orchestra / Nicholas Ward | 8.554447 |

#### **Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)**

Symphony No. 22 in E flat major 'The Philosopher'

- |   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| 6 | Movement 3: Menuetto                       | 3:11     |
| 7 | Movement 4: Finale: Presto                 | 2:55     |
|   | Northern Chamber Orchestra / Nicholas Ward | 8.550724 |

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)**

Symphony No. 35 in D major, K. 385 'Haffner'

- |     |  |          |
|-----|--|----------|
| [8] | Movement 4: Finale: Presto               | 3:48     |
|     | Capella Istropolitana / Barry Wordsworth | 8.550186 |

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Symphony No. 41 in C major, K. 551 'Jupiter'

- |     |  |          |
|-----|--|----------|
| [9] | Movement 2: Andante cantabile            | 11:21    |
|     | Capella Istropolitana / Barry Wordsworth | 8.550299 |

**Franz Joseph Haydn**

Symphony No. 104 in D major 'London'

- |      |  |          |
|------|--|----------|
| [10] | Movement 1: Adagio – Allegro             | 8:18     |
|      | Capella Istropolitana / Barry Wordsworth | 8.550287 |

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)**

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

- |      |   |          |
|------|---|----------|
| [11] | Movement 1: Poco sostenuto – Vivace       | 14:21    |
|      | Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia / Béla Drahos | 8.553477 |

**Franz Schubert (1797–1828)**

Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D. 759 'Unfinished'

- |      |  |          |
|------|--|----------|
| [12] | Movement 1: Allegro moderato                   | 14:45    |
|      | Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra / Michael Halász | 8.550145 |

**TT 75:39**

## CD 2

### **Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)**

Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14

[1] Movement 2: Un Bal 6:12

[2] Movement 4: Marche au supplice 4:41

San Diego Symphony Orchestra / Yoav Talmi 8.553597

### **Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)**

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73

[3] Movement 2: Adagio non troppo 9:39

London Philharmonic Orchestra / Marin Alsop 8.557429

### **Alexander Porfirevich Borodin (1833–1887)**

Symphony No. 2 in B minor

[4] Movement 1: Allegro 6:51

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Stephen Gunzenhauser 8.550238

### **Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)**

Symphony No. 10

[5] Movement 1: Adagio (excerpt) 6:28

Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra / Antoni Wit 8.550525–26

### **Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)**

Symphony No. 3 in C major, Op. 52

[6] Movement 3: Moderato: Allegro (ma non tanto) 8:41

Iceland Symphony Orchestra / Petri Sakari 8.554102

**Edward Elgar (1857–1934)**

Symphony No. 2 in E flat major, Op. 63

- |     |                                  |          |
|-----|----------------------------------|----------|
| [7] | Movement 3: Rondo                | 8:06     |
|     | BBC Philharmonic / Edward Downes | 8.550635 |

**Dmitry Shostakovich (1906–1975)**

Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93

- |     |   |          |
|-----|---|----------|
| [8] | Movement 2: Allegro                               | 4:13     |
|     | Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák | 8.550633 |

**Aaron Copland (1900–1990)**

Symphony No. 3

- |     |   |          |
|-----|---|----------|
| [9] | Movement 1: Molto moderato                  | 10:31    |
|     | New Zealand Symphony Orchestra / James Judd | 8.559106 |

**Witold Lutosławski (1913–1994)**

Symphony No. 1

- |      |   |          |
|------|---|----------|
| [10] | Movement 4: Allegro vivace                            | 5:16     |
|      | Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra / Antoni Wit | 8.554283 |

**Franz Joseph Haydn**

Symphony No. 45 in F sharp minor 'Farewell'

- |      |  |          |
|------|--|----------|
| [11] | Movement 4: Presto – Adagio (conclusion) | 5:46     |
|      | Capella Istropolitana / Barry Wordsworth | 8.550382 |

**TT 77:13**

DISCOVER THE SYMPHONY

# **Discover the Symphony**

by

**Andrew Huth**

## Introduction

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### **‘The Highest Development of Art’**

A brief definition: the symphony is an orchestral work in several contrasted movements which grew from obscure eighteenth-century beginnings to become the supreme form of western instrumental music.

The Greek derivation of the word – ‘sounding together’ – does not tell us very much, since that is what happens (or ought to happen) in any musical gathering. Before the eighteenth century various forms of the word ‘symphony’ might be applied to works combining voices and instruments. Giovanni Gabrieli, for example, published a collection of motets as *Sacrae symphoniae* in 1597, and another collection in 1615 as *Symphoniae sacrae*. He probably wanted to stress the ‘sounding together’ of the various combinations of voices and instruments he was writing for, often separated into different groups that would echo and answer one another across the basilica of St Mark’s in Venice. In the course of the seventeenth century the word’s association with vocal music was gradually dropped, and it would be applied more often to purely instrumental passages, such as the introductions to operas and cantatas, or the instrumental refrains at the beginning or in the middle of vocal arias. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, *sinfonia* had become the common term for what we would now call an opera overture.



It was a time when instrumental music was coming into its own, for in earlier periods vocal music was usually considered to be far superior, and the closer instruments came to the sound of the human voice, the better. But with the emergence of the symphony and string quartet later in the century the balance began to change. Composers and their audiences found that large-scale works without words could be every bit as expressive as anything the voice could produce, and the explorations of the great Classical composers laid the foundation for two centuries dominated by the idea of the symphony.

Haydn and Mozart in their different ways both brought the symphony to the highest level of invention, and Beethoven built on their achievements to become a crucial figure. His nine symphonies set standards that were all but impossible for others to match. After Beethoven the symphony was never something to be taken lightly. Brahms was well into his forties before launching his First, and Elgar, who maintained that 'the symphony without a programme is the highest development of art', was over fifty. Some great composers cautiously avoided writing any symphonies at all, others managed only one, and few major symphonists exceeded the fateful number nine.

Other instrumental forms like the piano sonata or string quartet have been vehicles for some composers' deepest and most adventurous thoughts, but they are usually intended for small audiences, perhaps only the players themselves. The symphony, by contrast, has always had an important public dimension. It is the form with which a composer addresses the largest possible audience, and with its increasing importance from the end of the eighteenth century it became a way for composers to express universal ideas. The concept of the



orchestra, too, stressed this public dimension. While the soloist in a concerto might represent the lone voice of the outstanding individual, in a symphony each instrument contributes to a whole, building up an image of a world in which many individual voices come together in an ideal society. The community of the orchestra reflects the community of the audience.

Of course 200 years have seen radical changes of style and perspective, as with any other type of music. In the twentieth century the centre of gravity of symphonic composition spread outwards from the Austro-German countries to Eastern Europe and Russia, Scandinavia, Britain and the United States. The symphony has had to adapt to many different cultural, economic and even political climates, but it has never lost its importance.

The mistaken idea that the symphony is some sort of sacrosanct form has often given rise to a pedantic attitude which insists that such-and-such a work isn't a 'proper' symphony: it contains too many or too few movements, uses the wrong sorts of instruments, doesn't respect the hallowed classical forms, and so on. Offenders include such big names as Berlioz, Stravinsky and Messiaen; and just to confuse matters, there are works that aren't called symphonies but actually are, such as Debussy's *La Mer*.

The symphony today escapes any neat or constricting definition because it isn't really a form at all but an idea. This might suggest that 'symphony' can mean more or less whatever a composer wants it to mean; but unless the composer is being provocative or perverse, the title does raise certain expectations. The most important of these is that it should show long-range musical thinking. It has to be more than just a succession of episodes. Ideally,



every detail, however small, should play its part in a large-scale structure where the balance between statement, development and re-statement, the relationship between separate movements, perhaps the use of tonality as an architectural device, all become elements of an overall plan, with carefully planned accumulations and releases of tension at important structural points. Any work calling itself a symphony should also create a unity out of the widest variety of means, with contrasts of pace, tempo, rhythm, instrumentation, melody and harmony, and all the other expressive resources at the composer's disposal. And however subtle or intimate the ideas, they will generally be conveyed in striking, bold effects, designed for large forces playing in large halls to large audiences. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, though, such ideals were still far in the future.



'Norah, my dear! When we had Crash-Bang for forty minutes, with three stoppages by the way, what did they call it?'

'A Symphony, papa,' replied Norah.

**Wilkie Collins, *No Name* (1862)**



# Part One

## The Eighteenth Century

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### I. Sixteen Thousand Symphonies

The emergence of the symphony as an independent musical form is largely the story of how composers drew on the various forms and techniques of their time to produce something recognisably new. There is no single clear source or style, but one connection was vital: Italian opera. For one thing, where there was opera there was an orchestra, and where there was an orchestra there was usually a demand for concert music.

Eighteenth-century concerts were nothing like concerts today. They were social gatherings, where music was only part of the entertainment. Vocal or instrumental soloists would feature strongly, and no piece would last very long. A good way of beginning such a concert might be to play the overture from the latest fashionable opera, and even this could be divided up into its different sections. A common type of overture that prevailed for many years was developed in Naples by Alessandro Scarlatti (1660–1725) and fell into three parts: a fast initial section, followed by a slower, more reflective passage and ending with a quick dance-like movement. Here is one source for the multi-movement symphony. Most concertos, too, followed a three-movement fast–slow–fast pattern.

The many different centres of musical activity in this period when Baroque

techniques were giving way to the new Classical style all had their local specialities. Cross-fertilisation of ideas came about when composers moved between cities and countries, or when wealthy music lovers brought home manuscript copies of the music they had heard on their travels. The picture is confused by the sheer number of symphonies that were produced at this time. A recent attempt to catalogue all the known symphonies composed in the eighteenth century came up with an astonishing tally of over 16,000, most of them very undemanding little works turned out in large quantities by composers who were obscure in their own time, let alone today.

One name that stands out is that of the Italian Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1700/01–1775), a prolific and influential composer who worked all his life in Milan. Some seventy-five of his symphonies have survived; many more are lost. His D major Symphony, J-C 16, probably composed in the late 1730s, is fairly typical of its period. It is scored for strings divided into three parts (violins, violas and cellos doubled at the lower octave by the double basses) with a harpsichord continuo.

This brief work follows the three-movement pattern of an extended opera overture and also of the north Italian type of concerto typical of Vivaldi and his contemporaries; but it is clearly neither overture nor concerto: it is an embryonic symphony containing all the features that would be developed and expanded over the next two decades. The first movement (**CD 1, track 1**) falls into two halves, each repeated. The second half begins with the same musical idea as that of the first, but in a different key, and extends the material before bringing it back in its original form to end the movement. The slow movement

in B minor (**CD 1, track 2**) is based on a sustained melody in the violins, and could well serve as the middle movement of a concerto. After two movements in duple time, the triple-time finale (**CD 1, track 3**) returns to the initial key of D major, the lively dance measure providing a clear contrast.

Milan was ruled in the eighteenth century by the Austrian Habsburgs, whose cultural influence was felt throughout the widespread Austrian domains as well as in the many small independent courts of southern Germany. Each of these maintained some form of musical establishment, varying in skill and numbers depending on the wealth and taste of the ruler, the initiative of the musical director, and the availability of good players.

The foundation of any orchestra was a body of strings, which was usually divided into four parts: first and second violins, violas, and a bass line provided by cellos and double basses. The Baroque practice of a harpsichord continuo was maintained long after it was strictly necessary in musical terms, although it still served to hold the ensemble together. Many symphonies were written for strings alone, but gradually other instruments were added until ensembles reached a form resembling that of the modern orchestra. Bassoons might be added to the bass line; a pair of horns would add strength and colour, and were particularly effective in enriching the texture and binding it together. Flutes and oboes, also in pairs, were favoured for their agility and colour, and later in the century the use of the warm-toned clarinets became more common.

A famous centre of orchestral excellence was the court of the Elector of the Palatinate Carl Theodor, who reigned at Mannheim in south-western Germany from 1742 to 1778. Its musical director, the Bohemian-born Johann Stamitz (Jan

Stamic) (1717–1757) gathered and trained a group of musicians who formed an orchestra that astonished visitors by its discipline and virtuosity. ‘An army of generals equally fit to plan a battle as to fight it,’ commented the English writer Charles Burney, while the German Daniel Schubart wrote:

Its *forte* is like thunder, its crescendo a cataract, its diminuendo a crystal stream bubbling into the distance, its *piano* a breath of spring. The winds are all used just as they should be: they lift and support, or fill out and animate, the storm of the violins.

Two of Stamitz’s fellow-composers, Franz Xaver Richter and Ignaz Holzbauer, were already experienced writers of symphonies before arriving in Mannheim, and after Stamitz’s death the orchestra continued to flourish under a second generation of composers who had been his pupils, including Christian Cannabich and Stamitz’s son Carl.

The early Mannheim style can be heard in Johann Stamitz’s Symphony in E flat major, Op. 4 No. 6, probably composed around 1755. From the beginning, we can hear that this is music conceived in orchestral terms. The first movement (**CD 1, track 4**) features the famous ‘Mannheim crescendo’ (a crescendo developed through the whole orchestra) and many passages involve dialogue between the different instruments and sections of the orchestra. Stamitz understood that large forms required bold contrasts. The slow movement (**CD 1, track 5**) unfolds like an operatic scene, with sudden changes of dynamics and instrumentation giving a sense of real depth and feeling.

The Mannheim style was much admired and imitated. By the 1760s many of its characteristics could be heard at public concerts in Paris, London, Vienna and the major cities of Germany. Audiences were impressed, unaware that they were missing out on the most interesting music then being composed. This was to be heard at private gatherings in the palaces of the powerful Hungarian Esterházy family.

## **II. Haydn the Pioneer**

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) was for generations known as ‘the father of the symphony’. He was certainly not its real father – it was already well established when he began composing – but he was its teacher, guide and inspiration, and in his hands the symphony came to maturity. In the course of a long and productive life Haydn came to be recognised as the most influential composer of his age. His supreme achievements are to be found in his symphonies and string quartets, but his enormous production includes also operas, sacred music, oratorios, concertos and much keyboard and chamber music.

Born into a modest family in the Austrian countryside close to the Hungarian border, Haydn was sent at the age of eight to Vienna, where he lived for nearly twenty years, first as a chorister at St Stephen’s Cathedral, then making a precarious living as a performer, teacher and composer. His first important appointment came in 1761 when he entered the service of the



Esterházy family. He lived and worked in their palaces for nearly thirty years, first at Eisenstadt, some forty-five kilometres south of Vienna, and then from 1767 at the more remote palace of Eszterháza in western Hungary. He led an outwardly uneventful life, determined as it was by the duties of any musician at a princely court of the period. He composed, arranged and directed the music for the twice-weekly concerts and was in charge of music in both chapel and opera house.

Haydn's early symphonies were composed for a small orchestra consisting usually of strings, two horns, two oboes and two bassoons, an ensemble that rarely numbered more than twenty players and sometimes no more than fifteen. He knew these players well, and also knew his audience well, so there is an intimacy about these works, a sense almost of collaboration between composer, players and listeners that any modern composer would envy. 'I not only had the encouragement of constant approval,' he said, 'but as director of an orchestra I could make experiments. I was cut off from the world, there was no-one to confuse me, and so I was forced to become original.'

Haydn was never content to repeat the standard gestures and formulae that served so many of his contemporaries. A restless and inventive mind, he was constantly trying out new solutions to the problem of writing extended works. The early symphonies show him experimenting with the number and balance of movements, their tempo, style and mood, their instrumentation and form, and other features that stimulated his imagination.

This is the introductory chapter of Discover the Symphony.  
The full booklet, illustrated with photographs and accompanied by two CDs,  
is available to buy from [www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com).