

Franz Joseph Haydn- The man and a mason

By Bro. David Lewis

April 25 2011

Introduction

History is, for many people, a litany of kings, queens, presidents, prime ministers, wars, plagues and general strife and mayhem. However important they are, what, for me, is more interesting is to understand how people lived and what they did in their daily lives. I will attempt to show how musicians and composers lived in the 18th century and, in particular, the great Joseph Haydn and outline how he lived and under what conditions.

There were no public concerts as we know them and no copyright laws and initially limited chance of publication. The only option open to them was service with Imperial, royal or noble households where their position was identical to any other domestic servant. There was no independence and little dignity. The Kapellmeister, the musical director who had great responsibility for composition of music, rehearsals and performances was similarly treated.

You may ask-why Haydn? The answer is that this was a very special man who lived a life typical of musicians of his time.

I would like to outline his life without going into an analysis or details of his musical output, which was huge. He lived a long life from 1732 to 1809 - a 77 year span from 18 years before the deaths of Handel, Bach and Vivaldi up to four years before the births of Verdi and Wagner.

This is his story

Early years

He was born in Rohrau, a small village on the border of Austria and Hungary which had seen much strife. The village was decimated by a Turkish invasion in 1683 when his great-grandfather and his wife lost their lives and again in 1704 when anti- Hapsburg Hungarians plundered the village.

Haydn's mother was a cook for the lords of Rohrau, the Counts of Harrach. She married a wheelwright, Mathias Haydn, in 1728 at the age of 21. They had twelve children five of whom died in infancy. Three sons survived into adulthood-Franz Joseph (b.1732), Johann Michael (b.1737) and Johann Evangelist (b, 1743), and it is interesting to learn that all three became professional musicians despite the fact that there was no musical background in the family. Michael became a well-known musician and composer who spent much of his life in the service of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg where Leopold Mozart was Kapellmeister. Johann Evangelist became a professional tenor singing in various choirs including Esterhazy. Although Mathias had no musical training and could not read music he had acquired a harp which he learned to play and used to accompany the family in singing folksongs in the evenings. He became a 'markrichter' responsible for the good conduct of the population, repairing roads and allotting labour for the Count. In fact a rather important official- something like a magistrate.

Joseph, or little Sepperl as he was known, had a beautiful voice

When he was six, a cousin, Johann Matheus Franck, who was a school principal in Hainburg, took him over to give him a better education especially in music. There he learned to play the organ and violin and kettledrums.

His upbringing was very strict and he said he got more beatings than food! At home his mother kept him clean and tidy but under Frau Franck his appearance suffered due to poor housekeeping. He said

“In fact I was a regular little ragamuffin....and I began to wear a wig for the sake of cleanliness”

In 1740 Georg Reutter, Kapellmeister of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, was told of a talented eight-year old singer and asked him to give an audition. He then became one of six fully funded choral scholars at the prestigious choir school where he was educated in Latin, religion, arithmetic, writing and was taught singing. He gained mastery of the harpsichord and became an accomplished violinist. He started composing at this time. He was there until he was 17. Franck wanted him to become a castrato but his father forbade it. At that time his voice broke and Franck threw him out on the street after a boyish prank. He was left just with the clothes he stood up in. He was fortunate to be given lodgings in a garret by an impoverished musician of his acquaintance. He stayed with him and his family in a room with no heating, windows or running water. He lived by playing at dances and evening musical events and taking pupils. A good friend, Anton Bucholz, lent him 150 florins which enabled him to purchase a “worm-eaten clavier”. He was introduced to various contacts by Countess Thun and worked 16-18 hours per day. She recommended him to Count Ferdinand Maximilian von Morzin who engaged him as musical director and composer at 200 florins per annum plus board. It was there that he composed his first symphony.

At this time he met Therese Keller and wanted to marry her but she decided to go into a convent. Her father persuaded him to marry her elder sister, thirty-one years of age and three years older than Joseph. She was a most unsuitable match. She was described as quarrelsome,

jealous, bigoted and a bad and wasteful housekeeper. Her only interest was the church and was not interested in his music at all. Members of Haydn's orchestra even said that Frau Haydn, out of pure mischief, used his scores as linings for her pastry or for curl papers for her hair. Haydn said of her "She doesn't care a straw whether her husband is an artist or a cobbler". He also said "My wife was unable to bear children and for this reason I was less indifferent toward the attractions of other women".

Esterhaza

Sometime later, Morzin had financial troubles and dismissed all of his musicians. Shortly afterwards Prince Paul Anton Esterhazy, who had heard him play at the Morzins, offered him the position of Assistant Kappellmeister to the elderly Werner who could no longer fulfil his duties. An extraordinary document was drawn up by the Prince's secretary, Johann Stiftell, being a 14 clause contract. Inter alia, he was appointed Deputy Kapellmeister in charge of musical performances and all that concerns the orchestra but would be subordinate to Werner in respect of the choir. He was treated as a member of the household and should conduct himself accordingly in an exemplary manner, abstaining from undue familiarity in eating, drinking and conversation. He should compose such music as the Prince may command and enquire twice daily whether His Highness is pleased to order a performance of the orchestra. He took charge of all music and instruments, as in those days, the musicians did not own their own. Any music he composed should be the sole property of the Prince and no-one else. (This was changed later so he could publish at his option). He has to instruct the female vocalists, (but no mention was made of male vocalists!). He would receive 400 florins per annum paid quarterly and shall board with the officer's table or receive a half-gulden per day in lieu thereof. He should eventually look forward to being appointed Kapellmeister. He, And his

orchestra, should appear in uniform in white stockings, white linen, powdered and with either a queue or tie-wig.

It is difficult to imagine any latter-day musician accepting these rules but it was common in those days.

In 1762 the Prince died and his brother Nicholas succeeded him. It was the beginning of a fruitful 30 year association. It was favourable to Haydn as this Prince was very keen on music and other cultural activities. He was a keen musician and played a baryton- which was a type of viol, the predecessor to the 'cello- now obsolete. It had sympathetic vibrating strings like a viola d'amore. Haydn taught himself to play it but this did not meet with the Prince's approval who said "it is no credit to you to play better than I do: it is your duty".

The musicians lived in Esterhaza without their families. As late as 1787 a visitor from London wrote "A musician, it would seem, has little honour in his own country as a prophet, and of this the celebrated Haydn furnishes remarkable truth. His only reward is a pittance which the most obscure fiddler in London would disdain to accept, together with a miserable apartment in the barracks in which are his bed and an old spinet or clavichord"

His relationships with his musicians were very good and despite his comparatively young age he was called "Papa Haydn" by them. Although he was of small stature he had a very warm and engaging personality and a great sense of humour, He acted as best man at some of their weddings and was godfather to many of their children. He once successfully intervened to prevent the dismissal of a musician who had the cheek to marry a singer without the Prince's permission!

In 1766 he purchased a small house in Eisenstadt, where he worked, initially in the Prince's castle.

You may ask- who were these Esterhazys? They were the top echelon of Hungarian nobility and the oldest and wealthiest magnates in the country. It was said that their income sometimes exceeded that of the Imperial Court. They possessed a large and magnificent picture gallery and had their own band of musicians. The original Baron Paul was a composer, violinist and 'cellist and by 1700 he owned 29 lordships, 21 castles, 60 market towns and 414 villages in Hungary alone. The current Prince did not care much for Vienna, where he had a palace, but preferred to live in Eisenstadt where he owned the castle. Strangely enough he did not own the town but surely had great influence there.

He owned a hunting lodge near the Neusiedlersee on the border of Hungary. It was a swamp of about 16 square miles- desolate, muddy and infested with insects. Fever was a 'permanent guest". Nevertheless he cleared the swamp, installed drainage and built a dam. He then proceeded to build a palace, which he called Esterhaza, based on Versailles which he had visited in 1767, with 126 guest bedrooms, two entertainment halls, an opera house with seating for 400 people, a marionette theatre, a park and incredible gardens with many statues. It took four years to build and when completed was not regarded, by Haydn at least, to be a healthy place to live. There was an enormous staff and was guarded by 150 grenadiers in uniform. Little wonder he was called Nicholas the Magnificent.

His idea was to stay in Esterhaza in summer and winter in Eisenstadt, but he liked Esterhaza so much that he stayed there for the best part of the year. This upset the musicians which caused Haydn to write his Farewell Symphony in which, in the last movement, the players, one by one, extinguished their candles and left until only one player was left.

The Prince got the message and ordered everyone back to Eisenstadt where their wives and families were located.

Nevertheless he continued to favour Esterhaza and invited many guests there. Empress Maria Theresa used to say that ‘If I want to enjoy a good opera, I go to Esterhaza’. Most of the operas were composed by Haydn who once received a gold snuff box filled with ducats from the Empress. It was reported that Haydn shot three grouse for her table.

The musical life was hectic as the Prince insisted on performing two operas and two concerts each week, This put great strain in Haydn as he had to compose most of the music himself. He wrote “My prince was always satisfied with my works...I was cut off from the world and I was forced to become original.” However in a letter in 1781 to his Viennese publisher he wrote plaintively “My great misfortune is that I live in the country”.

But he kept his feet firmly on the ground when he said “I have had intercourse with Emperors, Kings and many a great personage and have been told by them quite a few flattering things. For all that I do not care to be on intimate terms with such persons and prefer to keep to people of my own station”.

Despite the restrictions on his employees, the Prince came out tops when Haydn’s house in Eisenstadt burnt down. Haydn had borrowed money to purchase the house and so, potentially, was financially ruined.

When he heard about it Prince Nicholas paid for it to be rebuilt at his expense. The same thing happened in 1776 with the same charitable result. It is therefore easy to understand why he remained loyal to the Prince and in 1776 he wrote about his relationship with the Esterhazy family and said of them “..in whose service I wish to live and die”.

In 1779 the Prince engaged an Italian violinist, Antonio Polzelli and his wife Luigia, a mezzo-soprano. The Prince was not happy with their performance and they were told that their services were no longer required after the expiry of their contract in 1780, but they stayed on due, it is thought, to Luigia's relationship with Haydn. She was only 19, 28 years younger than he was. She was said to be a dark beauty and was married to a much older husband. She and Haydn embarked on a passionate love affair which continued for some time. No portrait of her exists and no letters have been found prior to 1791 when they were separated and the affair cooled down. After her husband's death Haydn rendered financial assistance to her until she remarried. Although there were hints at marriage, this was impossible as Haydn was not free to do so. She had two sons, the youngest of which was thought to be Haydn's but, of course, no proof of this exists. They had no DNA in those days! Nevertheless Haydn taught them music and treated them equally as a father. He also worked with other young musicians including Ignaz Pleyel and the brothers of Carl Maria von Weber. It is not known exactly when he met Mozart but it was possibly in 1783 at a Christmas charity concert.

In 1784 a quartet played some Haydn quartets. The first violin was Haydn, the second Leopold Mozart with Wolfgang Mozart on viola and Baron von Dittersdorff on 'cello. I would have loved to be a fly on the wall on that evening! The famous Irish singer, Michael Kelly was there and joked that the performance was "tolerable". Haydn told Leopold that "Before God and as an honest man, I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by reputation. He has taste and what is more a most profound knowledge of composition". They became good friends and probably this was strengthened by their mutual interest in freemasonry. Mozart was so impressed with Haydn's quartets that he dedicated a set of six of his own to him. In fact he did

not compose many operas after they met as he said that “scarcely any man can brook comparison with the great Mozart” And that from a man who had written many operas himself!

Freemasonry

In 1785 Haydn became a member of lodge Zur Wahren Eintracht (True Unity) probably on the recommendation of Mozart who belonged to another, smaller, lodge Zur Wohltatikeit. His request for admission was dated 29th December 1784 addressed to Franz Phillip von Weber, Hofsecretaire and Master of Ceremonies and reads:

“Nobly born, most highly respected Herr Hoff Secretaire,

The highly advantageous impression which Freemasonry has made on me have long awakened in my breast the sincerest wish to become a Member of the Order, with its humanitarian and wise principles, I turn to you, Sir, with the most urgent request that you have the great kindness to intervene on my behalf with the Lodge of the Order, in order to implement this petition, as indicated above.

I have the honour to remain, with profound esteem,

Your obedient servant, Josephus Haydn

Capellmeister to Prince Esterhazy.”

He was balloted for on January 10, 1785 which proved “white”. On January 28 he was to be initiated but was called back to Esterhaza and the summons did not arrive punctually “through the inefficiency of our Hussars”, so it was postponed until the next Friday. Mozart who intended to attend could not come as he was giving a concert that evening. A month later Leopold Mozart, the father, was initiated. What a month for Freemasonry!

It is said that he lost interest in Freemasonry but this is not the case. It must be understood that he was absent from Vienna for long periods and was noted as 'auf reisen' (abroad). There was a lodge nearby at Eberau Castle, where the Count was master, and it is quite likely that he attended whilst in Esterhaza particularly as his pupil, Ignaz Pleyel, was initiated there. However there is no evidence of this.

On 11, December 1785, ten months after his initiation, the Emperor Francis II issued an Imperial edict reducing the number of lodges in Vienna from eight to three as he was very nervous about the troubles in France at that time. Two lodges closed and later Freemasonry was banned in Austria.

He was asked to produce six symphonies for the 'La Loge Olympique' in Paris whose membership was only for freemasons. The orchestra played in "sky-blue costumes, with lace cuffs, their swords by their side and their plumed hats on the benches". They not only played music by Haydn but also by others including Luigi Cherubini who was a mason. Interestingly they allowed lady masons to perform who were members of the "Lodge of Adoption".

His sponsor in England, Johann Peter Saloman, was born in Beethoven's house in Bonn and was a member of the Pilgrim Lodge no. 238 E.C. in London. This lodge still exists and works in German.

In London he performed at the Free Mason's School at is it thought that he may have visited Pilgrim Lodge but there is no evidence of that or any other lodges he may have visited.

His oratorio "The Creation" contains a number of philosophical elements which equate to Masonic principles. This has been debated extensively and Powell said "In 'The Creation' Haydn is painting the opening words of the Bible, not a masonic text. Nevertheless... there is

evidence to suggest that Haydn had his own initiation....clearly in mind when he composed the famous opening section....” The great chorus ‘Let there be light’ can be argued as masonically significant.

Although Mozart wrote specific music for use in lodges, there are none known by Haydn. However there is evidence that he wrote some songs for lodge. There was very strict censorship of all printed material from foreign sources and the Imperial Censor withdrew an entry in the catalogue of his works amongst which were ‘Lieder zum gebrauch der Loge Zur Wahren Eintracht’,- songs for the use of the lodge, -but they were noted as ‘unbrauchbar” –useless, and have not been found.

He did not have to be taught about brotherly love, relief and truth as he practiced them before and after being made a mason. A few examples:

- After Mozart’s death he assisted his widow, Constanze, in many ways. He arranged to have his music published and also sponsored their two sons and arranged concerts for them.

- Even in his early days he financially assisted some of his relatives. This caused problems with his wife who resented this. On the other hand he was not very happy with her donations to the church!

- Hearing of the parlous financial situation of a music publisher in Scotland, William Napier, he arranged some Scottish folksongs for him which were a great success and restored Napier’s finances.

Early in his career he applied to join the Tonkünstler Societat, a charity set up to support indigent musicians and their widows. He sent an application with 300 guilders and they unrealistically demanded that he should compose any new music for them alone. He, quite reasonably, refused and withdrew his application. About 20 years later they wrote and apologized and offered him membership and free tickets for all

future concerts. The letter was signed by Antonio Salieri, Mozart's *bête noir*. As a result he performed gratis for them and raised a great deal of money for their charity.

About this time he met and taught Maria Anna von Genzinger, the wife of the Prince's physician. They developed a deep friendship and corresponded frequently. It was undoubtedly platonic but was nevertheless a very deep association. He wrote to her in 1790 " Well I sit here in my wilderness forsaken like a poor waif, almost without human society, melancholy, full of the memories of past glorious days..."

"These days I didn't know if I was Kapellmeister or Kapellservant...I lost 20 pounds in weight in three days before the effects of the good fare in Vienna had disappeared....Alas, when forced to eat at the tavern a slice of fifty year old cow instead of your admirable beef, an old mutton with turnips instead of a ragout with little forcemeat balls, a tough grill instead of a Bohemian pheasant....dry apple fritters instead of pastry... I again kiss your hands in gratitude for all the kindness you have shown me..."

Haydn came to world fame despite his isolation. The King of Spain sent him a golden snuff box set with diamonds. A canon from Cadiz sent him a chocolate cake as an honorarium filled with gold pieces. The British ambassador arranged for his works to be purchased by William Forster, a publisher. Another publisher, John Bland, travelled from London to obtain new works from him. He is remembered for visiting Haydn who said, "I would give my best quartet for a good razor" Whereupon Bland presented him with his own set of excellent razors and Haydn gave him what is now known as the 'Razor Quartet'.

The Philharmonic Society of Modena elected him a member putting to shame the Viennese Tonkünstlersocietat, of whom more later. Frederick Wilhelm II of Prussia sent him a magnificent diamond ring worth 300 ducats. Grand Duchess Maria Fedorovna of Russia sent him a valuable ring.

London

In September 1790 all would change. Prince Nicholas died and his successor, Prince Anton did not share his father's interests. He dismissed most of the musicians only keeping enough for the church services and, of course, Haydn and a few selected players. Prince Nicholas had bequeathed him an annuity of 1000 florins to which Prince Anton added 400 which left him still employed but free to do whatever he wished within reason and in more favourable financial circumstances. For the first time in his life he felt free and rushed to Vienna where he rented a house. One day a complete stranger arrived and introduced himself as Johann Peter Saloman who said "I have come from London to fetch you. We shall conclude our accord tomorrow." Saloman was a German violinist and impresario who shared the Beethovenhaus with the family in Bonn. He was also a successful impresario who gained a great reputation in Europe and then went to England where he gave subscription concerts. He happened to be in Cologne when he heard of the Prince's death and took the first coach to Vienna.

Under the accord Haydn was to receive 300 pounds for six new symphonies and 200 pounds for the rights to them (a sort of copyright), and a further 200 pounds for 20 new compositions. On account of this Saloman deposited 5000 florins in a Viennese bank for his account.

When one considers that his original annual salary of 400 florins was said to be equivalent to 74 pounds, this was a huge financial opportunity. Although the King of Naples had urged him to visit them, he chose England as he had received an offer he could not easily refuse.

Although he spoke and wrote German and Italian fluently (and presumably Hungarian) he knew no English. Mozart, when he heard of the visit said “O,Papa! You have had no education for the wide world and you speak few languages’ Haydn answered “But my language is understood all over the world!” Mozart had a premonition that this was their last meeting and he died a year later when Haydn was in London.

After stopping in Munich and Bonn, where he met Beethoven, they arrived in Calais and on New Year’s Day 1791 they embarked at 7.30.a.m. It was a very slow voyage with little wind until 4.00p.m.when a gale blew up. Haydn was fascinated with the sea as this was the first time he had seen it but he was not seasick. They arrived at Dover at 5.00 p.m. He was tired but exhilarated. They went up to London which at the time was the largest city in the world and everything was “different”. Another contemporary traveller said “It was a new world, different air, different architecture, different regulations, different customs, the highest degree of cleanliness and quite different people”

It was very much larger than Vienna which fascinated and at the same time frightened him. The traffic was dense with coaches, chariots and phaetons apart from sedan chairs. Of course he had not a word of English but Saloman assisted him greatly especially at a party in his honour where his toast was celebrated with ‘three times three’. He was quite overwhelmed with this. He did try to study English and took his ‘English grammar’ into the woods alone to study.

It is difficult for us to imagine the intricacies of London's musical life at that time. There were at least two rival opera houses, several professional concert societies and a number of oratorio performances. All of which competed for very appreciative audiences. In those days artists and virtuosos came from all corners of the Europe and earned very good money compared with Europe.

His diary, which he kept assiduously, noted "My arrival caused a great sensation throughout the whole city and I went the rounds of all the newspapers for three successive days. Everyone wants to know me. I could dine out every day but I must consider my health and my work. Except for the nobility I admit no callers till 2 o'clock in the afternoon" He visited members of the aristocracy and the affluent middle class- in fact a cross-section of English society. He made voluminous notes in his diary of all aspects of English life. He was invited to the court ball in honour of the Queen's birthday and was warmly welcomed by the Prince of Wales (later King George IV) even though he had not formally been presented at court.. Subsequently he was also invited to Carlton House, the Prince of Wales' residence, to play chamber music, He played there many times and sent a bill for 100 guineas as an honorarium for 26 appearances there. This was promptly paid despite the well-known fact that the Prince had huge debts.

He wrote a special opera for the London stage 'L'anima del Filosofo' but it was never performed as the King's Theatre ensured that they would fail to secure the necessary licence.. The impresario, John Gallini, nevertheless paid Haydn 5000 gulden as promised. Saloman arranged for 12 concerts to be given in the Hanover Square Rooms from March 11, 1791. On May 16 it was estimated that 1500 people attended even though the capacity of the hall was only 800. Haydn was very flattered and the Morning Chronicle reported that "he took the earliest possible

opportunity of making his most grateful acknowledgements to the English public in general “and will be remembered by him with infinite delight as long as he lives”. It was not difficult to persuade him to stay for another season.

He went to Oxford to receive an honorary doctorate. He recorded that he paid 1 ½ guineas for the bells to be rung and another half-guinea for his robe which was white with figured silk and cherry coloured border

In the meantime he took up with an attractive widow, Rebecca Schroeter, whom he said he would have married if he was free. They had a very close relationship. He wrote to Maria Von Getzinger that he would stay for 8 or 10 months and that he was enjoying his freedom from servitude. His employer, meanwhile, objected to his extended stay but finally relented and gave his permission for an extension of his stay. This relieved him of an awkward situation as he had already signed a legally binding contract with Saloman. The opposition Professional Concerts offered him a large fee to defect to them but he remained loyal to Saloman and Gallini.

The newly-wed Duchess of York invited him to stay at their country estate. She, just 17, was a daughter of King Frederick William II of Prussia and they got on famously. The Prince of Wales, who arranged the invitation, apparently accompanied Haydn “very tolerably on the ‘cello”

He basically went ‘everywhere’ and met everyone of note including Dr. William Herschel, the astronomer, his former pupil, Ignaz Pleyel, and Dr. Charles Burney, the eminent musicologist and composer, who wrote in 1789, “Verses on the arrival of the Great Musician Haydn in England” the first two lines of which read;

“Haydn! Great Sovereign of the tuneful art!

Thy works alone supply an ample chart”!

In May 1791 he attended a festival of Handel’s music held in Westminster Abbey for his 100th birthday and sat in a box near the Royal family. Handel was venerated in England with almost patriotic fervour. There were over 1000 performers and he was very impressed with the music saying that “He is the master of us all” This was probably the stimulus for him to write a large oratorio on the scale of the “Messiah”.

Vienna again

In 1792 he returned to Vienna stopping off in Bonn where he talked to Beethoven who was still his pupil, despite his being a very difficult character, arriving on July 29. His wife was as unfriendly as ever and asked him to buy her a house. On looking at it he bought it but for himself not her!! He turned again to Marianne von Getzinger but in January 1793 she died suddenly aged 38 leaving 5 children. He was inconsolable.

London again

In the summer of 1793 he struck a new agreement with Saloman and planned a second visit to London. He originally thought of taking Beethoven with him but thought better of it and took his copyist, secretary and personal valet, Johann Elssler who was devoted to him and looked after him for the rest of his life. This was similar to J. Smith who acted as an amanuensis to Handel when he went blind. The Prince reluctantly gave permission and they set out via Hamburg this time as France was considered too dangerous, arriving on January 19, 1794. He

took lodgings in Bury St, St James close to Rebecca Schroeter's house. Saloman arranged 12 concerts which were 'Received with rapturous applause'. He played with many eminent musicians including the violinist, Viotti and the double bass virtuoso, Dragonetti.

His orchestra treated him with love and esteem. Once when a drummer was absent so Haydn took over and showed them the correct way to use a drumstick.

In January he heard that Prince Anton had died suddenly aged 56. His successor, Prince Nicholas II wanted to revive his musical establishment and asked him to stay on as Kapellmeister once he had fulfilled his obligations in London. His duties would not be as onerous as before as he had appointed a deputy.

In February 1795 he was invited by the Prince of Wales at the Duke of York's house and met King George III. The King said "Dr. Haydn you have written a great deal" Haydn replied "Yes, Sire, a great deal more than is good" to which the King rejoined "Oh no, the world contradicts that". He was not so popular when, after the King offered him an apartment at Windsor, he politely refused saying that he had obligations in Vienna.

At this time his wife had got wind of his success with the ladies and wrote him venomous letters. He commented "My wife, that infernal beast, wrote me so many things that I was forced to answer that I was never coming back. To THIS letter she paid attention"!

Back to Vienna

In August 1795 he was back in Vienna and the new Prince welcomed him. He asked him to mount a new opera by Antonio Draghi to be

performed in his Viennese palace. This Prince preferred to be in the capital in winter and Eisenstadt in the summer but not in Esterhaza.

He had problems with the Prince who did not treat him with respect but he eventually came round due to his wife, Princess Hermengold. He was still full of energy and said “I want to write a work which will give permanent fame to my name in the world”. As it happened Saloman had given him a libretto that was based on Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’. He turned to Baron Gottfried van Swieten, the Flemish prefect of the Imperial Library to translate it into German. It turned out to be the first ever bilingual oratorio. In the following year he devoted a great deal of his life to this work which was completely in conformity with his strong religious beliefs. At the end of each work he always wrote ‘Laus Deo’.

He said “never was I so devout as when composing “The Creation”, the first performance of which was given for invited guests at the palace of Prince Schwegenberg. It was a great success and he was paid well. It created a sensation and for subsequent public performances the crowds were so large that the Prince had to pay to employ 30 policemen to keep order. This effort affected his health and he wrote “My business unhappily expands with my advancing years and my inclination and impulse to work increases”. Although in his mid sixties he did not confine himself to this entirely. He wrote his anthem for the birthday of the Emperor who gave him a gold box with the monarch’s portrait on it. At this time he arranged his quartet for the “Seven last words on the Cross’ for choir.

He now planned a sequel to the “Creation”, “The Seasons” with a text from the Scottish poet, James Thomson -also translated by van Swieten. At this time after conducting a performance of the “Creation” he travelled to Baden where his wife was dying. She passed away on March 20 probably to his relief. Thereafter he contracted rheumatic

fever and whilst recovering Luigia popped up again demanding that he marry her and give her money. In order to get rid of her he agreed not to marry anyone else and left her money in his will. She promptly married someone else!!

Last Days

Shortly after Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton arrived at Eisenstadt and she was entranced with Haydn. Nelson gave him a valuable pocket watch in exchange for the composer's worn out pen.

The "Seasons" was completed in 1801 but due to his poor health it was only premiered in public in 1802. His days as a composer were now over and his last major work, a mass, was performed in September 1802. Thereafter he did not conduct and only attended a few concerts. His last public appearance was at a performance of the "Creation: on 27 March, 1808 in honour of his 76th Birthday. It was reported that "His tears were streaming down his face and he raised his trembling arms as if in prayer to the Father of Harmony"

In 1805 the French captured Vienna and Napoleon was quartered in Schonbrunn. During the fighting a cannon ball fell in his courtyard but no harm came to anyone. Napoleon ordered that a guard of honour be stationed near his house and they should lay some straw on the cobbles outside his house so he could get some peace and quiet.

He made his final will which he had to have changed as both his brothers had died. He reduced Luigia's bequest and left money to a shoemaker, a blacksmith, a silversmith, a tailor, four workmen and two lacemakers apart from some relatives. Important legacies were left to Elssler, his cook and his housekeeper. He left about 55,000 gulden.

He died in his sleep on May 31, 1809 and his remains were interred in a mausoleum in Eisenstadt's Bergkirchen. Another item of interest is that J S Bach's last surviving relative, his youngest daughter, died that year in Leipzig at a great age.

Postscript

You may be interested to learn that the Esterhazy family still exists and the heir to the line is Paul-Anton Nikolaus Maximilian who was born in Munich in 1986 but is no longer a Prince as all noble titles were abolished in 1947 in Hungary and in 1919 in Austria. In the 19th century Prince Anton (1765-1833) was "improvident and dissolute" resulting in one of his successors finding themselves in financial difficulties. As a result he sold his art collection to the state on what were described as "favourable terms" (the figure was 200,000 florins). I was interested to read that the Israel Museum in Jerusalem held an exhibition of this collection in June this year. It comprised some 60,000 prints and 3,500 drawings and 600 paintings by famous artists. This collection led to the establishment of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. Even today this represents about 50% of their total collection. As far as I know this is the first time the collection has been exhibited outside of Austria or Hungary.

The main palace at Esterhaza is the only building still standing and was used by the Nazis as an officers' mess when they occupied Austria. It seems, strangely enough, that they preserved the contents of the Palace but in direct contrast, the Russians, who, when they absorbed Austria, chopped them all up for firewood including a portrait of Haydn which was in the Prince's private apartments. After the war the Austrian Government took it over and it is now a Hotel/ bed and breakfast establishment with very modest tariffs. Sic transit gloria mundi!! (Thomas a Kempis 1380-1471) How are the mighty fallen!!

Epilogue

You must have noted that throughout this talk we have not heard a note of Haydn's music. I would like to remedy this.

In 1787 Haydn wrote an anthem for the birthday of Emperor Francis II of the Holy Roman Empire. It was called "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser" – God save the Emperor- with lyrics by Lorenz Leopold Kaschka who was a mason. It became the official anthem of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1806 to 1918 when the monarchy was abolished. It was reinstated in 1923 until the Anschluss.

In 1922 during the Weimar Republic, Germany adopted the music to verses written by August Heinrich Hoffman von Fallersleben in 1841 which began with the words 'Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles' by which the tune is now generally known. It was very nationalistic urging the establishment of a united Germany- which it was not at that time. The Nazis adopted the first stanza along with the Horst Wessel song as their anthem playing it as a march instead of an adagio with generally bombastic march arrangements for brass band.

In 1945 the Allies banned it but in 1990, just before the unification of East and West Germany, the constitutional court ruled that the third stanza only could be used as the German national anthem for official purposes. It is interesting to note that in 1946 Austria initiated an official national anthem to the music of Mozart's Freimaurer Kantate –KV 623, Freemason's Cantata- so the good friends and brothers are equally represented in these national anthems.

Haydn used this melody in the Adagio movement of one of his string quartets, "The Emperor", which I have arranged for Bro. Crochet to play for you.

The reason I am going into all this at some length is that when he was very frail and could not play much or compose, Haydn played this on his piano several times per day. It was the last music he ever played and perhaps, his personal requiem.

In a moment I will ask you all to rise and to sing it. The text is attached to your programme. Perhaps the Austrians can sing the original words and the Germans the third verse; both are shown in the programme.

For those who cannot handle the German try the English version or just sing la-la-la but please sing!

It is a final tribute to a great man.

List of exhibits from my collection

1. A piano score of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" published by Breitkopf and Hartel in 1809- the year of Haydn's death.
2. "An Essay on the History of Music" by I. Nathan, London 1823 which was dedicated to "His Most Excellent Majesty George the Fourth with His Majesty's gracious permission". He was a pupil of Domenico Corri who had studied with Niccolo Porpora who had employed Haydn as a valet and an accompanist. He was a friend of Lord Byron and taught Princess Caroline singing. He wrote a number of Hebrew melodies, one of which was written from right to left (as in Hebrew) and wrote it in the usual left to right and noted "The same adapted for the convenience of those who find difficulty in reading backwards". In his book he writes that those "whose want of capacity renders them incapable of appreciating either the sublime or pathetic, and

presume to cavil at the works of Handel, Haydn and Mozart. Fie! Fie! Hide your diminished heads...”

3. “Memoirs of the life of George Frederic Handel” London 1760, the year after his death, no author quoted but was attributed to the Reverend John Mainwaring the rector of an obscure rectory in Church Stretton, Shropshire who drew on several sources for his book. Annotated ‘Scarce and valuable’ but not in good condition.
4. “The Messiah” arranged by John Bishop for piano accompaniment, London 1841, (100 years after it was composed). Haydn was reported to have burst into tears on first hearing the Hallelujah Chorus.
5. The score of the “Surprise Symphony” Bonanza Books, New York
6. A framed letter from Luigi Cherubini to M.de Jolirene in French dated 7 December 1816. Cherubini was a great friend and admirer of Haydn and called him “Dear Father”. In 1805 a false rumour spread that Haydn had died so Cherubini wrote a requiem for him and arranged for a ‘Special Memorial Concert’. Haydn was very amused to hear about this and he wrote a letter to the publisher Thomson in London “to prove that he was still of this base world” and said “The Good Gentlemen! I am greatly indebted to them for the unusual honour. Had I know of it in time, I would have travelled to Paris to conduct the requiem myself”!!
7. An 18th Century painting of a singer and a violinist. Note the convex bow which was used at that time.
8. “The Beauties of Handel” in two volumes by Jos Corfe, Gentleman of His Majesty’s Chapels Royal. Undated but printed in London by Preston late 18th Century with a long list of subscribers headed by “THE KING”

9. Catalogue of “The Prince and the Paper’ Masterworks from the Esterhazy collection in the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest which was displayed at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem,
10. Various pictures of people and places associated with Haydn.

Bibliography

1. Joseph Haydn- Freemason and Musician by John Webb
AQC London 14 May 1981.
2. Joseph Haydn -Freemasonry and “The Creation” by Christopher Powell. AQC vol.122 London 2010.
3. The lives of the great Composers – Haydn by Dynaley Hussey.
Pelican Books 1944.
4. Haydn- his life and music by David Vickers. Naxos Books ,
London 2008.
5. Haydn- A creative life in Music by Karl Geiringer
George Allen and Unwin Ltd. OUP London 1950.
6. The Oxford Companion to Music by Percy Scholes.
OUP London 1950.
7. The Larousse Encyclopaedia of Music. Edited by Geoffrey
Hindley. Hamlyn Publishing Group. London 1971.
8. An Anthology of Musical Criticism compiled by Norman Demuth.
Eyre and Spottiswoode . London 1947.
9. English Social History by G.M.Trevelyan. Longmans Green and Co.
London 1946.

Appendix A

A summary of Haydn's Musical Output

A complete catalogue of Haydn's works which is completely reliable does not exist as a number of works have been lost and some incorrectly attributed.

Symphonies

He is known to have composed 104 symphonies but there some who believe that there are others have not been found. He is acknowledged to be the 'Father of the Symphony' as he set the form for all of these works which were written thereafter. These are frequently performed today.

String Quartets

Similarly he set the form of the string quartet which has been followed by many others commencing with Mozart, He wrote a large number of these and also a great deal of chamber music for various instruments.

Church Music

He wrote many masses, requiems and birthday cantatas for his Prince and his family.

Operas

The Prince insisted on two operas every week being produced. Some were written by other composers but Haydn wrote a good number. They do not appear to have been adopted in the repertoire but the odd arias are sometimes performed. I saw that one was recently performed in Hamburg. It is thought that some were lost when his house burnt down (twice!)

Piano Music

He wrote numerous sonatas and other works for piano and harpsichord which are still performed today.

Baryton Music

As the prince played the baryton, Haydn wrote about 200 works for this instrument usually accompanied by violin and harpsichord which he played with the Prince.

Songs

He wrote numerous songs including many on Scottish themes which were published in Britain.

Appendix B

Publishers

Haydn's relationship with his many publishers is interesting and somewhat chequered. Even with his shrewd business dealings he was unable to satisfy all of them. He also had problems with pirated versions of his works.

His first publisher, Artaria and Company of Vienna, published 157 works of his in ten years (1780-1790). He was very fussy about the quality of the engravings and once told them that he was considering returning his fee and would sell the piano trio concerned to Hummel in Berlin as they did not come up to his standard.

They sent him a gift of "excellent cheese" and sausages and rectified the mistakes and continued to publish his works. They first published "The Creation" in 1800. He continued, though, assiduously to oversee and correct all publications.

His canny dealings sometimes caused trouble as once, perhaps in error, he offered the same work to two different publishers one being Boyer of Paris.

He also used Imbault of Paris and several publishers in England where his works were widely sought after and many of his later works were published there. Latterly he used Breitkopff and Hartel in Leipzig and Berlin who sent him presents including a diamond ring, silk handkercheives, English cashmere waistcoats and silken hose which pleased him immensely. They issued 25 thematic catalogues of his work but some were lost due to fires at both Esterhaza and Eisenstadt.

His copyist, Elssler, and his son had a number of copies of Haydn's works in their own handwriting which can be considered proof of authenticity.