



HAYDN

Late Symphonies • 5

Nos. 84, 85 'La Reine'
and 86

Danish Chamber
Orchestra

Adam Fischer



Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Late Symphonies • 5: Nos. 84–86

For us, the musicians of the Danish Chamber Orchestra and myself, it is a great and beautiful artistic challenge to be able to re-record the last 25 symphonies of Franz Joseph Haydn. We can use all the experiences we have gained in recent years with the complete symphonic recordings of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms to play this Haydn series in as exciting and colourful a way as possible. An imaginative and stimulating interpretation is crucial for all composers, but I believe that it is slightly more crucial for Haydn than for the others. Haydn's popularity has lagged behind Mozart and Beethoven's to this day, and that cannot be due to Haydn's music, only to how it is often played today. We all have to think about that!

If we know that he had the greatest success with audiences at the time, if we know that there was an atmosphere at his concerts that is only felt at rock concerts today, then we must accept that a performance that does not achieve a similar effect with a contemporary audience cannot be called truly authentic! We will almost never achieve such an effect as Haydn did back then, but we must at least strive for it again and again. Our playing must be powerful, stormy, exciting. How we will realise that is the big question. Each interpreter must find the answers for themselves.

I would like to mention some concrete examples here – list some of the technical solutions that we use increasingly in Copenhagen to achieve this artistic effect, which I believe have characterised the unmistakably stormy character of the playing of the Danish Chamber Orchestra for years. With the strings, we often use a series of fast, short strokes at the bow frog for *marcato* effects. We also constantly vary the playing styles *sul tasto*, *sul ponticello*, *flautando*, etc. To achieve greater variation in expression, we deliberately use different bow techniques such as *battuta* and *ricochet*, which have a more lively effect than 'normal' bowing. With the winds, we often vary the swelling and decreasing sound with sustained notes. We use 'quiet *forte*' and 'loud *piano*' because we are convinced that the character of the sound, not its decibel value, determines the dynamics, among other elements.

I have also found, however, that the special bow strokes we use in Copenhagen, for example, do not work properly in any other orchestra than the Danish Chamber Orchestra. This once again proves that technique is only a means. It must serve the individual, specific musical style, and enable a personal statement. I believe that over the years we have jointly developed a uniquely subjective and powerfully passionate style of playing in Copenhagen, which is particularly important for Haydn's music. The most important commandment of the Danish Chamber Orchestra at our concerts is that to play a wrong note is a venial sin, but to play a right note uninspired is a mortal sin. We believe that boredom must be declared war upon. And I hope that with our recordings we can captivate the audience just as much as we do with our concerts. We want to show everyone how great, dramatic, lively and emotional this music is. We owe that to Haydn.

Adam Fischer

Joseph Haydn was born in the village of Rohrau in 1732. After training at the choir school of St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, he spent some years earning a living as best he could from teaching and playing the violin or keyboard, and was able to learn from the old musician Porpora, whose assistant he became. Haydn's first appointment was in 1759 as Kapellmeister to a Bohemian nobleman, Count Morzin. This was followed in 1761 by employment as Vice-Kapellmeister to one of the richest men in the Empire, Prince Paul Anton Esterházy, succeeded on his death in 1762 by his brother Prince Nikolaus. On the death in 1766 of the elderly and somewhat obstructive Kapellmeister, Gregor Werner, Haydn succeeded to his position, to remain in the same employment, nominally at least, for the rest of his life.

On the death of Prince Nikolaus in 1790, Haydn was able to accept an invitation to visit London. Haydn landed in England for the first time on New Year's Day 1791, shortly afterwards reaching London, where he lodged with the violinist-impresario Johann Peter Salomon, who had arranged the visit. The Salomon concert season began eventually on 11 March in the Hanover Square Rooms, where Johann Christian Bach and his colleague Carl Friedrich Abel had earlier established a series of subscription concerts. Salomon's orchestra at this time consisted of some 40 highly competent performers and it was for them that Haydn wrote the first of his Salomon or London symphonies.

A second successful visit to London in 1794 and 1795 was followed by a return to duty with the Esterházy family, the new head of which had settled principally at the family property in Eisenstadt, where Haydn had started his career. Much of the year, however, was to be spent in Vienna, where Haydn passed his final years, dying in 1809, as the French armies of Napoleon approached the city yet again.

Keith Anderson

Never the Same

Joseph Haydn's *Symphonies Nos. 84, 85 and 86* from the mid-1780s were composed in a mood of triumph. Since May 1761, the composer had been employed as Kapellmeister at the court of the princely Esterházy family. His physical place of work had been the small town of Eisenstadt in what is now Austria – very much a provincial outpost. He had been responsible for matters as trivial as court entertainment and the musicians' clothing and pay. The prince at the remote palace would not even allow him to sell his exciting works to customers outside the household. In short, the conditions under Prince Paul Anton Esterházy had bound him to the estate and isolated him from the vibrant life of the great city of Vienna, which was, as a result, far too distant.

The mid-1780s then became a turning point. A new agreement with his princely employer was reached: Joseph Haydn was now allowed to publish his music himself and to accept commissions from outside. He could contact publishers all over Europe and establish a network of colleagues and cultural figures in Vienna. Young composers were inspired by his string quartet music, with its democratic interplay among all four musicians. Audiences in Vienna were just as enthusiastic about his symphonies, with their humorous formal language and colourful use of the orchestra's wind instruments.

Inspiration could run both ways. Haydn's encounter with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in the early 1780s proved decisive on all fronts. Haydn himself absorbed Mozart's dramatic shifts between major and minor, between joy and distress, between vitality and melancholy. Mozart, in turn, paid tribute to him in a series of exquisite string quartets from 1785 – nowadays known as his '*Haydn*' *Quartets* – which featured a warm and affectionate preface. In no time at all, Joseph Haydn had been reborn as the role model of young composers and, to his great delight, as the most talked-about composer in the world.

A commission from France became the period's high point. In the early 1780s, Paris had acquired an orchestra with ambition, the Concert de la Loge Olympique, which performed in the Tuileries Palace for hordes of enthusiastic listeners. Its wealthy patron, Count d'Ogny, was the orchestra's initiator, and himself active as a cellist at the third desk. The remarkably exotic Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, from Guadeloupe in the distant Caribbean, was the ensemble's permanent conductor. None other than Queen Marie Antoinette attended as many concerts by the virtuoso musicians as possible. The orchestra, dependent as it was on money from the aristocracy, dissolved quite suddenly around 1789 in the wake of the Revolution.

Joseph Haydn's six symphonies *Nos. 82–87* were composed for the Concert de la Loge Olympique's large ensemble. The success of these six works also led to Count d'Ogny commissioning *Symphonies Nos. 90, 91, and 92* a couple of seasons later. These three new symphonies are not called the 'Paris Symphonies' in the same sense as the previous set, owing to Haydn's somewhat dubious acceptance of money from a Bavarian aristocrat for the very same music!

The audience outside the Esterházy walls was new as well. Joseph Haydn had mostly known listeners from the higher echelons of society. Customers out in the city were now enthusiastic music lovers with a ticket to the week's offering. Did ordinary people need to be approached differently to the aristocrats of old?

The challenge was entirely real. An independent professional needed to understand such things, and Joseph Haydn learned the demands of his new audience the hard way. In the mid-1780s he had made contact with British agencies. Both he and his friend Mozart had been invited to London for an extended stay, and the offer from such a musical metropolis seemed attractive after his many years in the provinces. But he still had to honour his agreements with the count in Paris for six symphonies plus three new ones. Any arrangements in London could only be considered after he had fulfilled his Parisian obligations.

So he kept the British waiting – and waiting. His many fans in London soon began to doubt him, and a journal called *The World and Fashionable Advertiser* went after his music. 'Haydn is unquestionably a great composer,' reads a characteristic note in February 1788, 'but he copies himself all the time.' The journal lashed out at his 'inhospitable' universe and his 'endless' operas even during his thunderous successes in London a few years later.

These attacks are not directly mentioned in Haydn's correspondence from the period, even though he comments on all manner of things in his many diaries and autobiographical sketches. Audiences in Vienna, for example, sat completely motionless 'as if carved from stone' during his symphonies. Listeners elsewhere – he writes without a hint of irritation – happily applauded after every single movement!

Critics, by contrast, received few replies. Haydn's biography from 1810, by his friend and diplomat Georg August Griesinger, mentions only one remark: 'If I listened to my reviewers,' the composer is supposed to have said, 'I wouldn't get much written.' The anecdote is dubious, and yet very apt for his self-assured nature and robust humour.

According to scholars, his purchase of two pictures may have been a reaction to the conflict. The prints are drawings of audiences at two very different cultural events: one shows a reading of a 'tragic' text, the other of a 'comic' one, for chatting ladies and deep-sleeping gentlemen. Satire meant a great deal to Haydn. He had the drawings framed at great expense, and they travelled with him and were hung on the wall of his Viennese home. Customers, critics, and all other cultural figures (perhaps he thought while looking at the drawings) seem above all to be interested in themselves.

Symphonies Nos. 84, 85 and 86 may seem somewhat similar: all were written around 1786, all are shaped in the same way, and all are in major keys. The first movement consistently falls into two sections, with a slow introduction followed by a faster part featuring several themes. The calm second movement is, in *No. 84*, a kind of variation movement, and in *Nos. 85 and 86* a melodious 'romance'. The third movement invariably brings a pompous minuet followed by the slighter 'trio' section and a repeat of the minuet. Finally, the fourth movement of the symphonies is the fast finale, with sweeping effects and plenty of unexpected contrasts between loud and soft.

But the resemblance stops precisely there! The three symphonies resemble each other only on the surface. Even a quick listen reveals fascinating differences in the details. Joseph Haydn, with his inexhaustible imagination, finds new paths time and again. Just consider the introduction to *No. 84* with its astonishing colours and foreshadows of Gustav Mahler lurking in the background. Or his entertaining trio section in *No. 85*, with its rustic moods in the woodwinds set against a bed of plucking strings. Marie Antoinette's great fondness for this particular symphony, incidentally, gave rise to the nickname 'La Reine' ('The Queen'). Or take the star of all the Paris Symphonies: *Symphony No. 86*, with its intriguing kinship among the themes. The transition in the first movement between the slow introduction and the main section is arguably unmatched anywhere else in Haydn's music. H.C. Robbins Landon, the British musicologist and Haydn expert, once called the piece his finest symphony of all.

Joseph Haydn's *Symphonies Nos. 84, 85 and 86*, written for the Concert de la Loge Olympique in Paris, are somewhat of a musical genesis. One senses, in one moment, a heroic Beethoven, and in the next, an optimistic Mendelssohn. Every single movement in Haydn's three symphonies from the mid-1780s in fact has its own idea and its own arrow pointing towards future admirers. Once one has heard Haydn's gripping music, one knows where the Romantics got their familiar sound – and ultimately how Romanticism began at all.

Søren Schauser

Danish Chamber Orchestra



Photo: Toke Bjorneboe

The Danish Chamber Orchestra is unrivalled in Danish musical life. Its roots go back more than 80 years to its foundation in 1939, and in 2014 the orchestra changed from being part of DR (Danish Broadcasting Corporation) to an independent orchestra, fully owned by the musicians. The Danish Chamber Orchestra combines symphonic music at the highest international level with a broad popular appeal. The orchestra's chief conductor, Adam Fischer, has worked closely with the orchestra since 1997. Together with him, the ensemble has developed a sophisticated, energetic style of playing – especially in music of the Classical period. The orchestra has a tradition for bridging various musical genres and traditions, which has resulted in exciting collaborations with major Danish and international artists. The Danish Chamber Orchestra binds Denmark together through memorable musical experiences and its insistence on the social relevance of music. It is deeply committed to the development of talent and new concert formats.

Adam Fischer

Photo: Tøke Bjørneboe



The Hungarian-born conductor Adam Fischer (b. 1949) graduated from the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest and undertook further studies in Vienna. He is much in demand within both the opera and concert repertoire and has cooperated with a great number of leading international concert halls and opera houses, including the Vienna State Opera, La Scala and The Metropolitan Opera as well as such orchestras as the Wiener Philharmoniker, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Berliner Philharmoniker. Adam Fischer has been associated with the Danish Chamber Orchestra since 1997, serving as chief conductor from 1998, where he still is a major driving force and initiator both in Denmark and internationally. In 2019, he was awarded the international Wolf Prize for Music, was nominated Conductor of the Year by Presto Classical in the UK, and received the *BBC Music Magazine* Orchestral Award for his recording of Mahler's *Symphony No. 1* with the Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra. In 2022, he received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Classical Music Awards (ICMA).

www.adamfischer.at

Haydn composed the three symphonies in this volume during the mid-1780s in a spirit of triumph. Though still employed by the Esterházy family, he had recently been allowed to publish his music himself and to accept outside commissions. A number of symphonies were duly commissioned by a new, large ensemble recently established in Paris. Superficially similar, they reveal Haydn's inexhaustible creativity whether in the astonishingly colourful introduction to *No. 84*, the rustic interludes in the trio section of *No. 85* – a favourite of Marie Antoinette, or in the greatest of the Paris symphonies, *No. 86*, where the transition from the slow introduction to the main section is unequalled in his music.

Franz Joseph
HAYDN
(1732–1809)

Symphony No. 84 in E flat major, Hob.I:84 (1786) 21:58

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|---|-------------------------|------|
| 1 | I. Largo – Allegro | 6:58 |
| 2 | II. Andante | 6:21 |
| 3 | III. Menuet: Allegretto | 3:06 |
| 4 | IV. Finale: Vivace | 5:33 |

Symphony No. 85 in B flat major, Hob.I:85 'La Reine' (1785–86) 19:38

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|---|---------------------------|------|
| 5 | I. Adagio – Vivace | 6:39 |
| 6 | II. Romanze: Allegretto | 6:11 |
| 7 | III. Menuetto: Allegretto | 3:37 |
| 8 | IV. Finale: Presto | 3:11 |

Symphony No. 86 in D major, Hob.I:86 (1786) 24:52

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|----|---------------------------------|------|
| 9 | I. Adagio – Allegro spiritoso | 7:46 |
| 10 | II. Capriccio: Largo | 6:05 |
| 11 | III. Menuetto: Allegro | 5:04 |
| 12 | IV. Finale: Allegro con spirito | 5:57 |

Danish Chamber Orchestra • Adam Fischer

Recorded: 29 1–4, 30 5–8 and 31 9–12 October 2024 at Studio 2, Danish Radio, Copenhagen, Denmark

Managing director: John Frandsen • Executive producer: Daniel Tølbøll Mortensen

Producers and editors: John Frandsen, Daniel Davidsen • Engineer: Daniel Davidsen

Edit consultant: Ivar Bremer Hauge • Booklet notes: Adam Fischer, Keith Anderson, Søren Schauser

Publisher: Bärenreiter Verlag – Edition BA4688 1–4, BA4686 5–8, BA4689 9–12

This recording was generously supported by the A.P. Møller Foundation, the Aage og Johanne

Louis-Hansen Foundation, the Knud Højgaard Foundation, the Augustinus Foundation,

the William Demant Foundation and the Danish Ministry of Culture

Cover: *Marie Antoinette in a Chemise Dress* (1783) by Élisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842)

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