

HAYDN

Piano Trios • 8

Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 13

Divertimento, Hob.XIV:C1

Aquinas Piano Trio



Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Piano Trios • 8

Hob.XV: 5, 6, 7 and 13 • Divertimento, Hob.XIV:C1

From impoverished teacher/street serenader to ‘culture-hero’, transitioning from the patronage system to free artist, garret to palace, the most celebrated composer of late-18th century Europe – Habsburg Vienna, pre-Revolution Paris, Georgian London – Haydn was the inspirational messenger of the Classical age. The ‘Father of the Symphony’, he was equally so of the string quartet and piano trio, and sire – if not parent to – the piano sonata, between Mozart, Dussek, Beethoven, Hummel and Schubert. Robust in his humour (wit often shading into irony, James Webster notes), he was master of the elegant phrase and buoyant rhythm (Tovey used to write of his ‘exquisitely bred kitten’ themes), and magician of the unexpected. Born of south German stock in an ethnically diverse region of Lower Austria – the Croat and Hungarian elements of which remained with him throughout his life (think of the 1786 *L’Ours Symphony*, or the 1795 *Rondo all’Ongarese* trio) – he was an industrious man of honest character and Catholic virtues, regarded by his fellow musicians, admired by his public, valued by his employers (the Hungarian Esterházy family, 1761–90), and ‘loved by many a pretty woman’ (according to his 1810 biographer Albert Christoph Dies), to whom on his own admission, given an unhappy marriage, he was not indifferent. Of ‘naturally cheerful temperament’ (though, contemporaries reported, not without a darker side), he was generously giving in his personal life, astute in his business dealings, and a mentor and example to many. Mozart got on agreeably with him. Rather less so the young Beethoven, impatient to push on with his own destiny.

Of the many piano trios listed in Hoboken’s three-volume 1957–78 catalogue of Haydn’s works, more than half are examples dating from between 1784 and 1795, *Paris* to *London* symphonies vintage. In the styling of the day they were typically titled *Sonates pour le Clavecin ou Piano Forte accompagnées d’un Violin et Violoncelle*, strings generally doubling, occasionally stiffening/supplementing, keyboard. While indicative perhaps of the textural character of examples composed in the 1780s, such labelling is less true

of those conceived a decade later. During this last period, as Karl Geiringer observed in *Haydn: A Creative Life in Music* (1946), ‘the piano trio [in Haydn’s hands] changed from a type of composition treated in an offhand manner to a carefully elaborated form’ in which all three instruments have some independence within the discussion as a whole. More *Kenner* (‘connoisseur’) music than *Liebhaber* (‘amateur’) – and, as such (together with Mozart’s mature canon), pointing the way towards Beethoven and Schubert.

The piano trio medium, the keyboard generally, was a popular calling card in Joseph II’s Vienna – ‘land of the clavier’, as Mozart wrote in a letter to his father in 1781. ‘Such works,’ Katalin Komlós remarks, ‘were evidently written for a relatively wide circle of music lovers who enjoyed home music making. Sonatas, accompanied or unaccompanied, were not meant primarily for public performance, so chamber music basically fulfilled the function of *Gebrauchsmusik*. The piano was favoured mainly by ladies [...] Two-thirds of the Viennese keyboard trios published in the 1780s bear a [socially/influentially apposite] dedication, and nearly all are addressed to ladies ... Most of Mozart’s pupils were ladies (quite a few of them from the aristocracy).’¹

Piano Trio in F major, Hob.XV:6 (Landon 19) (1784)

‘In Nomine Domini – di me Giuseppe Haydn 784’

The first of *Three Sonatas, Op. 43*, published in Vienna (Artaria) and London (Longman & Broderip) in April/July 1786, dedicated to Madame la Comtesse Marianne de Witzay, Prince Nicolaus Esterházy’s niece. The opening *Vivace* is brisk and bright (Madame must have had a neatly disciplined technique), with a tonally exploratory development section, minor keys and marginally liberated violin and cello enlivening the profile. The second movement takes the guise of a moderated minuet, the violin having a more individualised say, both in the *minore* ‘trio’ section and as a viola-like middle voice. The written-out *da capo* includes ornamented, varied repeats rounded off by a short codetta.

Piano Trio in C minor, Hob.XV:13 (Landon 26) (1788–89)

The third of *Three Sonatas, Op. 57*, published in Vienna (Artaria) and London (Longman & Broderip, 'for Piano-forte or Harpsichord') in July 1789. 'I send you herewith the third trio,' Haydn informed Artaria, 'which I have rewritten with variations, to suit your [i.e. public] taste' (29 March 1789). The first movement, *Andante*, is in double variation form, with a first theme in the minor offset by a song-like second one in the major, the successive pair of variations following the same sequencing. Both violin and cello enjoy comparative independence in a persuasive canvas of conversational, harmonically articulate chamber music *à trois* exquisitely crafted. With its *concertante*-like piano writing, the ensuing triple-time sonata *Allegro spiritoso* is big-boned, contrasting strongly defined subjects and transitions, and a coda, veering into soft A flat regions, but an *adieu* away from Beethoven. 'Numerous and sometimes spectacular modulations,' understandably comments the veteran French critic Marc Vignal (1989).

Piano Trio in G major, Hob.XV:5 (Landon 18) (by 25 October 1784)

The third of *Three Sonatas, Op. 40* published in 1785 by William Forster, 348 Strand near Exeter Exchange, London, 'Manufacturers of Grand & Small Piano Fortes, & Importers of French Pedal Harps' – of which set, however, the first and second were in fact the work of Haydn's gifted former student Ignaz Pleyel, then based in Strasbourg. An extended 69-bar *scena* sets the stage, with portentous unisons (simple on paper, harder to manage in performance) and interactive intricacies launching proceedings, piano and violin in graciously florid duet, neither formal shape nor harmonic discourse in question. The second movement, cello in supportive continuo role, is in the *galant* style, rhythmic formulae, primary harmonies and familiar clichés shaping mood and direction from the outset. The initial subject typifies a simple mix of tonic, subdominant and dominant sequencing, worthy of a courtly symphony of no great pretensions but plenty of good cheer, coquettish curls and toy soldiers in the distance. The finale sets out and signs off like a minuet but with a *variazioni* rather than 'trio' middle section. Teasing.

Piano Trio in D major, Hob.XV:7 (Landon 20) (1785)

'In Nomine Domini – Giuseppe Haydn mp 785'; at the end 'Fine Laus Deo'

Second of the *Op. 43* sonatas (detailed under *Hob.XV:6* on page 2). Craft a shapely original tune or borrow one in vogue and a set of variations was always to be guaranteed from someone before long. The Classico-Romantic era thrived on the genre. From the charming (Mozart's *Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman*) through the profound (Haydn's, in F minor) to the monumental (Beethoven's *Diabelli*), the craft of decoration, fantasy and re-invention, imitation to metamorphosis, was well practised. The opening *Andante* of the present trio offers a monotonal set of five on a 16-bar binary theme, each half repeated. The transitional second movement, another *Andante* but this time in the minor, is in post-Baroque 6/8 *sicilienne* rhythm – finished a matter of months before Mozart's correspondingly veined *Adagio* in the larger of his A major piano concertos, *K.488*. Haydn's sonorous use of string *pizzicati* stands out. The closing rondo, with its energy and interactive ensemble, *Symphony No. 88* refrain on the horizon, poses innocence before bolting the stable. D minor and F major are at least as important as D major – similarly, the audacious play on enharmonics and pivotal pitches. One cadence has E flat turned into an un-harmonised D sharp, the tonal axis swinging brusquely into B major. Another sees F sharp resolving to D major via B minor. The notion of oscillating keys through shared tones rather than procedural modulation was lost on neither Beethoven nor Schubert (famously so in the *scherzo/trio* relationships of their *Seventh* and *Ninth* symphonies respectively).

Divertimento (Piano Trio) in C major, Hob.XIV:C1 (Landon 16) (?1766)

According to Georg Feder's *Grove* catalogue, this youthful four-movement work may date from even before the Esterházy period, c. 1760. In his 1976 Vienna edition, cancelling out an attribution to Wagenseil², H.C. Robbins Landon affirmed, contrary to Feder, that in early 1803 Haydn, through Griesinger, verified the music as authentic. Existing in versions for (a) cembalo, two violins and bass (Breitkopf catalogue, 1772) and (b) solo keyboard (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek), the trio realisation draws on a manuscript, *Divertimento per il*

Clavicembalo Violino e Basso Del Sigre Haydn, in the archives of Kroměříž Castle, Moravian seat of the bishops and archbishops of Olomouc. In a proviso, Landon reasonably precautions that ‘we cannot determine whether the work was originally a piece for keyboard solo, or a piece with two violins and bass, or a piano trio [... nor can we] vouch for the genuineness of the string parts.’

Ateş Orga

Aquinas Piano Trio

The Aquinas Piano Trio (Ruth Rogers, violin; Katherine Jenkinson, cello; Martin Cousin, piano) has established itself as one of Britain’s most sought-after chamber groups. Career highlights include a Schumann concert series at Kings Place, London, and performances at the Menton Music Festival in France, the Chipping Campden Music Festival in the UK, and the Kirker Chopin Festival in Mallorca. The group’s growing list of recordings includes the Saint-Saëns trios, released on Guild in 2015, and the Mendelssohn trios, which was *The Strad’s* Editor’s Choice in May 2015. Their continuing support of contemporary music saw them premiere new works by Thomas Hyde and Rob Keeley and record Rob Keeley’s *Piano Trio No. 2* for Naxos. The trio has also recorded works by Michael Stimpson, Lawrence Rose, Smetana, Rachmaninov and Haydn. The Aquinas Piano Trio performs regularly at London’s Wigmore Hall. www.aquinaspianotrio.co.uk

¹ Komlós, Katalin: *The Viennese Keyboard Trio in the 1780s: Sociological Background and Contemporary Reception* (*Music & Letters*, July 1987)

² Scholz-Michelitsch, Helga: *Das Orchester- und Kammermusikwerk von Georg Christoph Wagenseil: Thematischer Katalog* (Vienna, 1972)



As one of the most celebrated composers of the late 18th century, Joseph Haydn can lay claim to being ‘father of the piano trio’ alongside that of other genres established in his lifetime such as the symphony and the string quartet. The delightful *Divertimento in C major* is a youthful work, but the later piano trios recorded here take on a heightened sophistication. Strings and keyboard are given a new independence of character in exquisitely crafted works such as the *C minor Trio*, with its ‘numerous and sometimes spectacular modulations’, and oscillating enharmonic key changes that foreshadow Schubert can be heard in the *Trio in D major*.

**Franz Joseph
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(1732–1809)

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Piano Trio in F major, Hob.XV:6 (1784)	12:55	Piano Trio in D major, Hob.XV:7 (1785)	13:26
1 I. Vivace	5:57	8 I. Andante	6:36
2 II. Tempo di Menuetto	6:56	9 II. Andante	3:25
Piano Trio in C minor, Hob.XV:13 (1788–89)	15:56	10 III. Allegro assai	3:19
3 I. Andante	9:56	Divertimento (Piano Trio) in C major, Hob.XIV:C1 (?1766)	8:11
4 II. Allegro spiritoso	5:58	11 I. Andante	3:15
Piano Trio in G major, Hob.XV:5 (c. 1784)	13:40	12 II. Presto	0:53
5 I. Adagio non tanto	4:21	13 III. Menuet	2:49
6 II. Allegro	6:16	14 IV. Finale: Allegro	1:11
7 III. Allegro	2:58		

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Ruth Rogers, Violin • Katherine Jenkinson, Cello • Martin Cousin, Piano

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