

Review Essay

Haydn Recordings in the Bicentennial Year

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IN ANTICIPATION OF THE 200TH anniversary of the death of Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), a number of early keyboard specialists embarked upon complete recordings of Haydn's keyboard works, all but one of which was released before the Haydn Year 2009. These recordings include not only the complete solo keyboard works, but also the complete keyboard trios — a wonderful and often neglected facet of Haydn's keyboard output. In a real marriage of performance and scholarship, every keyboard work Haydn wrote (including some contemporary arrangements of works by Haydn in other genres) has now been committed to disc on a stunning variety of instruments. Thus, in 2009, we can finally hear Haydn's keyboard music performed on a veritable constellation of clavichords, harpsichords, and fortepianos, reflecting the wealth of keyboard instruments available to Haydn during his life-long career as a composer of keyboard music.

Previous to this recent crop of recordings, there were very few interpretations on disc of Haydn's works on the harpsichord, and only a small number of recordings by a handful of fortepianists of a variety of programs, very few of which included the early works. Expanding on the fortepiano interpretations of the standard programs by Malcolm Bilson and Paul Badura-Skoda, we now have four complete sets of Haydn's keyboard sonatas, two complete sets of the miscellaneous or non-sonata works (henceforth called *Klavierstücke*), a number of readings of assorted *Klavierstücke*, and a complete set of the keyboard trios. Taken together, these sets employ twenty-one instruments, of which a number are antiques. This enormous body of work delights enthusiasts of Haydn's keyboard music by finally offering recordings to accompany the groundbreaking research of Haydn scholars A. Peter Brown, Georg Feder, Christa Landon, H.C. Robbins Landon, László Somfai, and James Webster, who have long championed this repertoire. In this essay I will focus on the recordings of three keyboardists: Bart van Oort, Christine Schornsheim, and Tom Beghin.¹ While Schornsheim

¹ Dutch pianist and fortepianist Ronald Brautigam made complete recordings of the keyboard sonatas and *Klavierstücke* on the fortepiano for the BIS label (BIS-CD-1731/33) in the late 1990s and early 2000s that were re-released for the Haydn Year as a 15-CD box set (EAN

and Beghin have blazed the wider trails in terms of the number and different kinds of instruments used, van Oort has made an impressive contribution in terms of the wide scope of repertoire recorded.

The Question of Instruments

Perhaps the most compelling question addressed by this collection of recordings is the complicated one of which instruments are the appropriate ones for the performance of Haydn's keyboard music. This is a particularly ambiguous matter in the case of Haydn, whose sonatas and *Klavierstücke* were written across a roughly forty-year period during which many changes in aesthetics and instrument-building took place.

Most scholars agree that the "Auenbrugger" sonatas of 1780 (Hob. XVI: 35-39, 20) mark a turning point in which Haydn shifted from the harpsichord to the fortepiano. Published by Artaria in Vienna as "Sonate per il Clavicembalo o Forte Piano," this is the first set to include two instruments as options on the title page, and they are the first sonatas with highly nuanced dynamic indications as well, ranging from *pp* to *ff*, sometimes following each other in quick succession.² While publishers continued to include both harpsichord and fortepiano on their title pages well into the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, largely in an attempt not to exclude those who had not yet bought a fortepiano of some kind, practically everything about the "Auenbrugger" sonatas points to the necessity of a touch-sensitive instrument for their full realization. Haydn's "Bossler" sonatas (Hob. XVI: 40-42) of 1784 were the first works published specifically for the fortepiano ("pour le Pianoforte," by Bossler in 1784), but we do not have circumstantial evidence of Haydn owning a piano until 1788. In that year he wrote to Artaria that "In order to compose your three *Clavier* sonatas particularly well, I was compelled to buy

7318591731337). This set will not be considered for this article, but it must be mentioned since, in terms of repertoire covered, it is as complete as any of the other sets. Brautigam used a Walter replica (c. 1795) by Paul McNulty (1992) throughout.

² Although dating the works before 1766 is difficult since Haydn did not begin cataloging his works until then, it seems that the Sonata in B-flat Hob. XVI: 18, usually dated as "before 1766" is actually the first sonata to contain dynamics. Though the dynamics only range from *p* to *f*, the sonata also includes other striking new elements, such as, in the first movement: a fioratura passage in m. 7; a preponderance of short slurs (cf. mm. 17 — 21); a sinewy chromaticism not seen in many of the early sonatas (cf. m. 21 — 29); and in the second movement, a number of detailed articulation marks: double thirds (mm. 15, 17, 84, 85) in the right hand; and broken octaves (mm. 40, 65-66, 104) in the right hand.

a new Fortepiano."³ While we cannot be certain that Haydn is referring here to the purchase of his first fortepiano, we do know that the "new" instrument he bought in 1788 was built by Wenzel Schanz. We also know that Haydn's later works written during his London sojourns were inspired by the pianos of John Broadwood, which differed greatly from their Viennese counterparts in many respects, most notably in compass (FF — c⁴ versus FF — f³ or g³) and in their damping mechanism, which was less precise and featured a lot of "after-ring."

Most scholars also agree that the early works written during the 1760s (and perhaps 1750s) up until 1772, were conceived for the harpsichord. Recent organological research by Richard Maunder and Alfons Huber has shed welcome light on the Viennese harpsichords Haydn knew during that time, particularly those with the so-called Viennese short octave (*Wiener Bass-oktave*).⁴ A small number of works from this period, most notably the Capriccio on the folk tune "Acht Sauschneider müssen sein," Hob. XVII:1 (1765) have chords in the bass spanning a tenth that are only realizable on instruments with this particular short or "broken" octave configuration. (When this work was first published in 1788 by Artaria, perhaps without Haydn's consent, these passages were reconfigured to fit on a fully chromatic keyboard.) However, even the topic of harpsichords can be thorny. Viennese harpsichords of this period closely resembled Italian harpsichords in that they were single manual instruments with only two 8' registers, with no easy way to change registration while playing. But Haydn may have had access to French double-manual harpsichords as well, which differ significantly in their usual disposition of two 8' registers and a 4' register, with easily accessible handstops at the front of the case. A. Peter Brown has conjectured that Haydn's employer Prince Nikolaus Esterházy would almost certainly have had such an instrument at the court, not only because the Viennese aristocracy had a penchant for French culture, but also because Prince Nikolaus consciously set out to create the Eszterháza

³ Joseph Haydn, *Gesammelte Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Dénes Bartha (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1965), 195-96. Quoted in Sandra P. Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 20. "Clavier sonatas" here refers to the keyboard trios Hob. XV: 11-13. See László Somfai, *The Keyboard Sonatas of Joseph Haydn: Instruments and Performance Practice, Genres, and Styles*, trans. Charlotte Greenspan and the author (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 20.

⁴ See Richard Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 34-47. See also Alfons Huber (ed.), *Das Österreichische Cembalo: 600 Jahre Cembalobau in Österreich* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2001).

palace in the image of Versailles.⁵

This leaves in contention two sets of sonatas, the so-called “Esterházy” Sonatas and the “Anno 776” Sonatas, both of which date from the 1770s — the decade during which the fortepiano gradually came to ascendancy while the harpsichord and clavichord remained popular. The “Esterházy” set (Hob. XVI: 21-26), dedicated to Haydn’s employer Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, and published by Kurzböck in Vienna in 1774 as “Sei Sonate per Cembalo,” was Haydn’s first authorized publication in any genre. The second group (Hob. XVI: 27-32) appears in Haydn’s catalog under the title “6 Sonaten von Anno 776” but was never formally published, first appearing in an edition by Hummel issued without Haydn’s consent in 1776.⁶ László Somfai claims that the sonatas in both sets are unequivocally harpsichord works, while Sandra Rosenblum makes a more nuanced argument that these may already be fortepiano works, or at least works requiring a touch-sensitive instrument.⁷ Rosenblum cites H.C. Robbins Landon’s account of an eyewitness at Eszterháza in 1773 who reported that “...there was a grand table and a musical concert, at which a musician was even heard on a pianoforte.”⁸ One may well imagine that Haydn had early access to fortepianos at the wealthy Esterházy court, even though he may not have owned one himself until the 1780s.⁹ As further evidence, Rosenblum points to the 1771 autograph of the exposition of the

⁵ A. Peter Brown, *Joseph Haydn’s Keyboard Music: Sources and Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

⁶ At this time Haydn’s contract prevented him from publishing works on his own initiative, or composing for anyone besides the prince. This restriction was lifted in Haydn’s contract of 1779. See James Webster and Georg Feder, *The New Grove: Haydn* (New York: Macmillan, 2002), 22.

⁷ See Somfai, *The Keyboard Sonatas of Joseph Haydn*, 29, and Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*, 19-20.

⁸ Rosenblum, *Performance Practices*, 20.

⁹ Frederick the Great of Prussia owned a number of fortepianos by Gottfried Silbermann. In a footnote to a 1768 edition of Jacob Adlung’s *Musica Mechanica Organoedi* (1758), Johann Friedrich Agricola gave a lengthy account of J.S. Bach’s encounters with Silbermann’s pianos, including the famous visit to Frederick the Great’s court in 1747; while Bach criticized Silbermann’s instruments from the 1730’s, he seems to have approved of Silbermann’s adjustments in the later instruments. According to Agricola’s footnote to Adlung: “... [Silbermann] thought constantly about improving upon the faulty points that Hr. Bach had noted... Finally, when Hr. Silbermann had really made many improvements especially regarding the touch, he sold one to the court at Rudolstadt... Shortly afterwards the King of Prussia (Frederick the Great) had one of these instruments made, and as it met with his majesty’s approval, still more of them were ordered from Hr. Silbermann.” See Rosenblum, *Performance Practices*, 5, and Michael Cole *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 20.

first movement of the Sonata in C minor (Hob. XVI:20) which contains many dynamic indications (and was eventually included as the last sonata in the “Auenbrugger” set), and she asks whether Haydn may have already had access to a fortepiano when drafting this work.

Indeed, many aspects of the “Esterházy” sonatas point to a new keyboard idiom, most notably a heightened refinement of articulation marks, and a more pianistic texture, the latter most obviously on display in the set’s many lyrical slow movements. Five out of the six sonatas have expressive slow second movements in place of the Menuet and Trio movements that abound in the sonatas from the 1760’s. The Adagio of the first work in the group, the Sonata in C major, Hob. XVI: 21, bears a strong kinship to the Adagio of the Sonata in C major, Hob. XVI: 50, written some twenty years later. To cite two examples, both employ florid scalar gestures (compare Hob. XVI: 21/ii, m. 2 with Hob. XVI: 50/ii, m. 7), and both contain similar octave passages in the right hand (see Hob. XVI: 21/ii, m. 22 and mm. 58-61; and Hob. XVI: 50/ii, mm. 20-21, and mm. 55-57). There is simply no keyboard writing that resembles this in the sonatas written before 1773. It is not enough to scour a work for dynamics in order to ascertain whether it is meant for the harpsichord or the fortepiano, and indeed, several indications in these pieces suggest the possibility of performance on the clavichord.¹⁰

The Esterházy Sonatas, and particularly such movements as the exquisite second movement of the Sonata in D major, Hob. XVI: 24, certainly work very well on the clavichord. While this movement has no dynamic indications, its detailed articulation marks such as the *tenute* in measure 9 and the portato in measures 13 and 30 seem to call out for a touch-sensitive instrument. Indeed, both of these markings are described in the first volume of C.P.E. Bach’s *Versuch* (1753), the latter (portato or “Tragen der Töne”) as an expressive device particular to the clavichord.¹¹ The works from the “Anno 776” set likewise have

¹⁰ We should note that clavichords were ubiquitous throughout German-speaking lands and continued to be built as late as 1820, when their production began to decline. See Bernard Brauchli, *The Clavichord* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 230. Haydn almost certainly owned a clavichord throughout his life, and is said to have composed “The Creation” on a five-octave (F-f3) clavichord by Johann Bohak, 1794; now housed in the Royal College of Music in London, it is the only instrument owned by Haydn which has survived. (See Somfai, *Keyboard Sonatas*, 19.)

¹¹ “The more recent pianoforte, when it is sturdy and well built, has many fine qualities, although its touch must be carefully worked out, a task which is not without difficulties. ...Yet, I hold that a good clavichord, except for its weaker tone, shares equally in the attractiveness of the pianoforte and in addition features the vibrato and *portato* which I produce by means of added

much in their makeup that points towards a touch-sensitive instrument. While many examples could be cited, perhaps the best are the writing found in the Sonata in F major, Hob. XVI: 29 and that found in the second movement of the Sonata in A major, Hob. XVI: 30, a touching variation set full of lyricism that explores myriad articulations and extremes of range.

Finally, to clavichord, harpsichord, and fortepiano as possible instruments for the performance of Haydn's keyboard works, we must add the square piano. As Richard Maunder has shown, it is likely that the piano Haydn bought in 1788 was a square.¹² Square pianos were much more popular than grands with the amateur (mostly female) keyboard players for whom Haydn wrote the majority of his works; the square piano afforded not just a space-saving and cheaper solution for home music-making, but it was also better-suited acoustically to the drawing room. In addition, these instruments had a wide variety of "stops" or "registers" which those of us more familiar with "grands" have only just begun to explore.¹³

Due to the eclecticism of the keyboard scene during Haydn's lifetime, there will likely be no clear answers to many of these questions, but any performer poised to take on Haydn's keyboard music must be aware of the many issues at stake when deciding on instruments for performance. Rosenblum closes her argument by simply stating: "At this time we can only conclude that irrespective of his personal preferences Haydn's sonatas were probably played on whatever instrument was available."¹⁴ In the end there are really no "right and wrong" answers here: in fact, it is useful to try Haydn's works on a variety of instruments, because each brings something different to the music, and because the majority of these works were certainly played on any number of instruments, including others not mentioned here (the *Tangentenflügel* for instance). Fortunately, as we shall see, due to the convergence of the work of musicologists, organologists, instrument builders, instrument restorers, and enterprising early keyboard specialists, a plethora of instruments is now available to present-day performers who are interested in embarking on this journey.

pressure after each stroke." Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. and ed. William J. Mitchell (New York: Norton, 1949), 36 paragraph II. See also 156-7, fn. 17 and paragraph 21.

¹² Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments*, 108-09.

¹³ For more on the square piano of the eighteenth century see Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*.

¹⁴ Rosenblum, *Performance Practices*, 20.

The Recordings

Bart van Oort

In 1999, Bart van Oort organized a group of five players — himself, Ursula Deutschler, Riko Fukuda, Stanley Hoogland, and the late Yoshiko Kojima — to record a complete set of the Haydn sonatas using six fortepianos, three of which are antiques. The instruments used are:

An anonymous five-octave Viennese fortepiano, (c. 1785), restored by Edwin Beunk

A Johann Schanz replica by Tom and Barbara Wolf (1983)

Two Walter replicas, c. 1795: by Paul McNulty (1996), and by Chris Maene (2000)

Two English fortepianos: by John Broadwood (1794), and by Joseph Kirckman (1798), both restored by Beunk

To my knowledge, this is the first complete set of Haydn's keyboard sonatas on period instruments, and it is notable for using such a wide number of instruments, split evenly between replicas and antiques. Also notable is that this is still the only set to feature a Schanz replica: the Schanz brothers Johann and Wenzel were the only instrument builders definitively associated with Haydn besides Broadwood and Bohak (see above). This collaborative set was released in 2000 in two volumes of 5 CDs each on Brilliant Classics: Vol. I (Brilliant 99556) and Vol. II (Brilliant 99746), and again in 2006 as a ten-CD box set (Brilliant 99817).¹⁵

While these players decided to restrict themselves to the fortepiano, it is clear from the liner notes (each performer supplied their own notes for each disc, while van Oort supplied comprehensive notes for the entire project) that everyone was well aware that the early sonatas are more appropriate to the harpsichord. Each player strives to play these works with the appropriate care and nothing is overtly "pianistic" here. Each player performs roughly the same number of pieces from each of Haydn's stylistic "periods," so that each disc features a number of instruments. Thus, we can hear the Schanz replica or the "Anonymous" alongside the McNulty/Walter, and both Walter replicas alongside the English pianos, to create a very immediate comparison that conjures the sense of traveling through Haydn's sound world.

The Schanz has a shorter tone life than either of the Walters, and serves

¹⁵ The reviewer is consulting the earlier release for this article.

the music's rhetorical nature extremely well. It has a sweet sound, with a real difference in timbre between the registers. Throughout the set, it is clear that both Walter copies have a brighter tone than the other Viennese-type instruments, with the Maene/Walter seeming to be the brighter and more "speech-like" of the two. The Anonymous is a real gem whose tone is warm and personal, and we get the sense that we are hearing a little of the piano's action as well, which adds to the speaking, intimate quality of the instrument. Both the English grands have a similar character, their expansive yet slightly dull sound made fuller by the voluminous after-ring so sought after in these instruments.

There is not enough space here to comment extensively on the individual performances, but each of these musicians brings something wonderful to the endeavor. The playing of Yoshiko Kojima is exquisite and spirited throughout, and one deeply mourns the untimely passing of such a sensitive artist. Highlights of her playing here include her renditions of Hob. XVI: 24 and Hob. XVI: 40. Equally impressive are Ursula Deutschler's readings of Hob. XVI: 37 (the *Largo e sostenuto* is particularly breathtaking) and Hob. XVI: 30. Riko Fukuda is the only player in the set to exclusively play the Anonymous, and in her dramatic performance of the Sonata in C-sharp minor, XVI: 36, she shows the instrument's broad expressive range. She uses the moderator expertly in the Trio of the last movement, producing a truly effective 'register' shift. Bart van Oort's playing is both electric and deeply expressive by turns, which is beautifully demonstrated in his reading of the Sonata in A-flat, Hob. XVI: 46. Stanley Hoogland is the elder statesman in this group, having taught three of the other players. In this project, Hoogland reveals his thorough understanding of the style with perfect renditions of exuberant early works such as the Sonata in C major Hob XVI: 7, and late masterpieces such as the magisterial Sonata in E-flat, Hob XVI: 52. In the Finale of this work, Hoogland creates a whirlwind of excitement with his rhythmic drive, giving just the right punch to all the impertinent *fz*'s. His reading of the Sonata in E minor Hob XVI: 47 is also noteworthy: the first movement is rendered so that we hear every articulation mark clearly, bringing the work's rhetorical genius to the fore, while tasteful variants on the repeat heighten the drama. The suspense between the first and second movements is palpable, as is the ensuing joy once the proceedings continue in E major.

In 2005 Bart van Oort released a ten-CD box set of the Complete Piano Trios (Brilliant 92794) with members of his ensemble The Van Swieten Society — violinists Rémy Baudet and Franc Polman, flutist Marion Moonen, and cellists Jaap ter Linden and Job ter Haar, all stellar players active on the Dutch

scene. This is a "must-have" collection that demonstrates how greatly these pieces benefit from renderings on period instruments, in which balance issues fall to the wayside. For his recordings of these wonderful and still relatively neglected trios, van Oort used three different fortepianos:

Walter replica c. 1785 by Gerard Tuinman (2002)

Walter replica c. 1795 by Chris Maene (2000)

Walter replica c. 1800 by Tuinman (2001)

The collection includes a number of early trios written during the 1760s and 1770s, deemed "probably authentic" by Feder and Webster, and van Oort supplies sufficiently sparkling renditions to reflect their harpsichord roots. He and his colleagues also turn in a stunningly beautiful reading of the Adagio of the Divertimento in G major Hob. XV:41 (1767?), with van Oort using the moderator throughout, and his "accompanists" (Polman and ter Linden) adding a gossamer veil of sound around the florid, operatic keyboard lines. This standout movement reveals a different aspect of Haydn's keyboard language than that found in his solo works.

The thirty-one authentic trios by Haydn were written between 1784 and 1796, and show a wealth of imagination and colors afforded by the combination of fortepiano and strings. Van Oort wisely chose the 1785 Walter copy for the flute trios; while these works were written in 1790, this instrument, with its nimble and light tonal character, is a perfect match for the period flute. It would have been fun, however, to have heard the late trios written for Rebecca Schroeter (XV: 24-26) and Therese Jansen Bartolozzi (Hob XV: 27-29) performed on an English grand — an experiment which, to my knowledge, has not yet been made.

Most recently, in 2008, van Oort tackled the Klavierstücke (five CDs, Brilliant 93770), using a Walter replica (c. 1795) by Chris Maene, 2000.¹⁶ He perhaps added more works than some would have, including numerous sets of Minuets, most of which are keyboard arrangements of orchestral dances, but it is precisely from the perspective of the practice of arranging that these sets are so interesting. In the case of the Twelve Menuets, Hob IX:11 (1792) and Twelve New German Dances, Hob IX:12 (1792), for example, we find Haydn making a particularly careful consideration of the piano texture.

¹⁶ In the spirit of full disclosure, I should note that I wrote the liner notes for this set of recordings, and also recorded the Sonata for four hands in F major, Hob. XVII/a:1, "Il maestro e lo scolare" with van Oort for the set.

Countless works in this period were arranged for the home music market so that people could have the chance to perform large-scale works they had heard in the theater at home. Indeed, composers strove to make such arrangements themselves when they could, lest enterprising music publishers did so first. A good example of just such a situation is Beethoven's arrangement of his Second Symphony for piano trio, published in 1805, a contemporary review of which stated clearly the way that such arrangements were viewed:

Beethoven's rightly celebrated Symphony in D, which has been frequently and thoroughly discussed in these pages, appears here as an arrangement. We may well presume it is for those who do not entirely hear this very difficult work completely, or who, amid the abundance of artistically interwoven ideas and perhaps also amid the all too frequent use of the shrillest instruments, cannot understand it well enough. Finally, it is also for those who through recollection want to repeat the pleasure of the complete performance and look over and examine more calmly whatever was not entirely clear or particularly to their liking.¹⁷

The reviewer goes on to remark that the arrangement is successful.

One of the highlights of Van Oort's recording is the performance of the *Seven Last Words of our Savior on the Cross*, Hob. XX: 1c, found on CD 5, using an arrangement for solo piano by an unidentified arranger (but approved by Haydn) published by Artaria in 1787. Haydn was particularly complimentary about the arrangement in a letter to Artaria: "Among other things," he wrote, "I must praise the piano score, which has been prepared very well, and with exceptional care."¹⁸ (As in the other instrumental versions of the work, in this piano arrangement the Biblical texts are placed under the opening melodic lines.) This is a well thought-out arrangement which makes expert use of the pianos of the time, creating textures that resemble those found in the slow movements of many of Beethoven's early sonatas. Indeed, this arrangement is all the more striking for not resembling the rest of Haydn's keyboard output at all. Van Oort's playing is gorgeous throughout, and is also appropriately dramatic in both the introduction and the last movement — the Earthquake.

¹⁷ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 9 (1 October 1806). In Wayne M. Senner, ed. and trans., *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries*, 2 vols., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), I: 201-02.

¹⁸ Haydn, *Gesammelte Briefe*, 171. Quoted by Miklós Dolinszky in editorial notes for Haydn, *Klavierstücke — Vol. II: Arrangements* (Budapest: Kónemann Music Budapest, 1997).

Christine Schornsheim

Released in 2005, Christine Schornsheim's "Complete Keyboard Sonatas" (Capriccio/WDR 3 49 404) represented a real breakthrough in that someone had finally recorded Haydn on clavichord, harpsichord, and fortepiano. While fortepianists had long been the biggest champions of this repertoire, Schornsheim came to this project as a specialist who is primarily a harpsichordist, and her willingness to take on the clavichord and two kinds of fortepianos as well, in order to cover more fully the spectrum of instruments known to Haydn, is highly commendable. Her set comprises thirteen CDs of music and one interview disc.

For this project, which includes a number of the *Klavierstücke*, five instruments, including three antiques, were used:

French double manual harpsichord by William Dowd and Reinhard von Nagel (Paris, 1976)

Double manual English harpsichord by Jacob and Abraham Kirckman (London, 1777)

Replica of an unfretted clavichord by Joseph Gottfried van Horn (Dresden, 1788) by Burkhard Zander (Cologne, 1999)

Fortepiano by Louis Dulcken (Munich, 1793) restored by Edwin Beunk & Johann Wennink.

English fortepiano by John Broadwood and Son (London 1804)

Notably, Schornsheim considered the Dowd/von Nagel to be an historic instrument, citing in her descriptions of the instruments the work of Frank Hubbard and William Dowd as the catalyst for the harpsichord-building revival. In fact, her detailed descriptions of the instruments in the accompanying booklet (all texts are in German, English and French) are a real attraction, as is the interview disc (with Clemens Goldberg, in German) where the instruments and the music are discussed. Notes by Ulrich Leisinger are informative and entertaining. Leisinger explains that the works have been organized according to character and theme rather than chronology or set, so that each disc features a program with a descriptive title. The decision was made not to mix instruments and temperaments, and only one instrument is used per disc.

Schornsheim chooses the clavichord for a program entitled "Inspired." The opening work is the jaunty and good humored Sonata in B-flat, Hob. XVI: 2, an early work from the 1760's. This is a wonderful way to open the clavichord program since it dispels our typical notion of the clavichord as an instrument

meant primarily for the sighing gestures (*Seufzer*) of the *Empfindsamer Stil*. However, we immediately get just such a work in the Sonata's second movement, a *Seufzer*-laden Largo in G minor. Schornsheim makes use of the instrument's expressive vibrato or *Bebung* to great effect right away in the second bar. This is followed by a much later work, the tender Arietta No. 1 in E-flat with 12 Variations, Hob. XVII: 3 from 1788/89 which works very well as a clavichord piece, and receives a beautiful reading here.

The discs recorded on the French double manual harpsichord are a particular revelation. Suddenly, another facet of Haydn shows itself here. The works recorded on the Dowd/von Nagel, all from before 1766, come alive in a way they do not quite manage to on the fortepiano. Also revealed in many places is a kind of keyboard writing that resembles that of the French *clavecinistes*, not to be seen again in Haydn's works from circa 1770 and beyond. Here we find the "Stile brisé" in countless places (i.e. Hob. XVI: 13/i, mm. 7-10) and notation for "overholding" that is reminiscent of François Couperin. (For just one example, compare Hob. XVI: 10/ii, mm. 27-32 with Couperin's *Double des Canaries* from the Second *Ordre* of his *Pièces de Clavecin*.) Schornsheim's performances of these sonatas on the French harpsichord brings these elements to the fore and makes the works that much more colorful. Her reading of the Adagio of the Sonata in G major, Hob. XVI: 6, where she employs the buff stop to great effect, is also exquisite. Though one might quibble that Haydn would not have had access to such instruments during this point in his career (pre-Esterházy), one might also turn the argument around and wonder whether some of Haydn's students, for whom it seems many of these works were written, might not have been well-to-do enough to own such a harpsichord. It is hard to say.

Schornsheim approaches the sonatas from the 1770s by splitting up the two sets, playing half on the Kirckman harpsichord, and half on the Dulcken fortepiano. Thus, Sonatas Hob. XVI: 23-25 from the Esterházy set can be heard on the Kirckman, an instrument that represents the height of English harpsichord building in the 1770s. These instruments have highly complex dispositions that allow for an astounding number of quick register changes, not to mention the use of the "Venetian swell" for a crescendo/decrescendo effect. Schornsheim puts these possibilities to good use, resulting in a reading of the Sonata in F major, XVI: 23, for example, that is nothing if not colorful. In the first movement there is a dizzying array of tonal colors on display, all happening in quick succession. For those only used to the French harpsichord, the sound of the lute register might come as a surprise. Schornsheim literally pulls out all the stops for her two Kirckman discs, and why not? Londoners who

owned such instruments would certainly have done so. Haydn's works from the 1770s made it to London about a decade later, and, in addition to readings on the square piano, this is quite possibly how they may have been heard there.

Schornsheim's fortepiano playing, however, does not seem to have the same range of imagination when it comes to tonal palette. There is much that is beautiful in her rendition of the Sonata in C minor, Hob. XVI: 20, on the Dulcken, but elsewhere a certain nuance in lyrical lines seems to be missing. This is especially noticeable in her reading of the Adagio of Hob. XVI: 50 on the Broadwood, where there would have been a real chance to create "clouds" of sound. Her reading is disappointingly un-poetic for a movement that is surely one of the most tender and heartfelt works not only in Haydn's output, but in the piano literature altogether. Taken as a whole, however, one must thoroughly appreciate Schornsheim's set for its colorful menu of instruments, and for being the first set to incorporate such a wealth of different sounds and aesthetics.

Tom Beghin

The third Complete Haydn project, not yet released at the time of writing this essay, is a rich and exciting one by Tom Beghin entitled "*The Virtual Haydn*."¹⁹ For this review Mr. Beghin supplied a number of preliminary materials pertaining to the project, as well as a preview of the recordings. This project takes advantage of the state-of-the-art recording facilities at McGill University's Schulich School of Music, as well as a technology referred to as "Convolution Reverb" that allows one to "sample" the acoustics of any space, and then proceed to "record" in that space. With Convolution Reverb, Beghin has been able to add to a large collection of keyboard instruments a wide variety of historical 'rooms' — spaces either associated directly with Haydn, such as the Ceremonial Room at Esterháza, or very like spaces Haydn or his "players" would have known, such as the exquisite drawing room in Montreal called the Salle de Nantes.

Of all the specialists here, Beghin has gone the farthest in terms of the number and variety of instruments used. He has commissioned several fascinating instruments, most notably copies of a Viennese harpsichord by Johann Leydecker (the first replica of this antique), a Viennese square piano (*Tafelklavier*) by Ignaz Kober, again the first replica of its kind, and a groundbreaking two-for-one Walter that has the ability to be both a 1782 "early" Walter *Stossmechanik* with hand stops for raising the dampers and engaging the moderator, and a c. 1795 "late" *Prellmechanik* with knee levers for raising the

¹⁹ Scheduled for release by Naxos (NBD0001-03) on three Blu-ray discs, on 9.24.2009.

dampers and engaging the moderator. In other words, there is one case with two actions here, and as Beghin illustrated in a Mozart recording of 2006, the actions greatly change the sound of the instrument.²⁰

In total, this project uses seven instruments by four different builders, all of them replicas commissioned specifically for this project:

Viennese harpsichord with “Viennese short octave” or “multiple-broken octave” by Johann Leydecker (Vienna, 1755) by Martin Pühringer (Haslach, 2004)

Saxon-style clavichord (c. 1760), by Joris Potvlieghe (Tollembeek, 2003)

French-style harpsichord (c. 1755), by Yves Beaupré (Montreal, 2007)

Square piano (*Tafelklavier*) by Ignaz Kober (Vienna, 1788) by Chris Maene (Ruisselede, 2007)

“Early” Viennese fortepiano by Anton Walter (Vienna, 1782) with *Stossmechanik* by Maene (Ruisselede, 2005)

“Late” Viennese fortepiano Walter (Vienna, ca. 1790) with *Prellmechanik*, by Maene (Ruisselede, 2005)

English grand piano by Longman, Clementi & Co. (London, 1798) by Maene (Ruisselede, 2004)

Like Schornsheim, Beghin offers a series of programs that feature one instrument, but he groups works together by set (the “Auenbrugger” sonatas are recorded together, for example) and/or by tonality and chronology. There are ten programs of sonatas and various *Klavierstücke*, with copious appendices — a feat made possible by the decision to release the project on Blu-ray.

The enormity of Beghin’s undertaking cannot be overstated. To have thoroughly researched the keyboard instruments of Haydn’s time and then to have commissioned this many instruments is one thing, but to get well-acquainted enough with each of them to make these recordings is another. Beghin’s mastery of the intricacies of the Viennese short octave, for example, is brilliantly — and hilariously — demonstrated in a revealing, and highly recommended, performance of the Capriccio on the Austrian folk tune “Acht Sauschneider müssen sein” (“It Takes Eight to Castrate a Boar”). As Beghin vividly shows in the

²⁰ For a detailed account and description of this instrument, see Tom Beghin, “Playing Mozart’s Piano: An Exercise in Reverse Engineering,” in Annette Richards, ed., *Keyboard Perspectives*, I (Ithaca: The Westfield Center, 2008), 1-35. See also Beghin’s CD of keyboard works by Mozart released in 2006 (Et’Cetera KTC 4015), on which he recorded the Fantasia K. 397 using both actions (*Stoss* and *Prell-mechanik*), clearly illustrating that though the case of the instrument remained the same, the instrument sounded remarkably different depending on which action was employed.

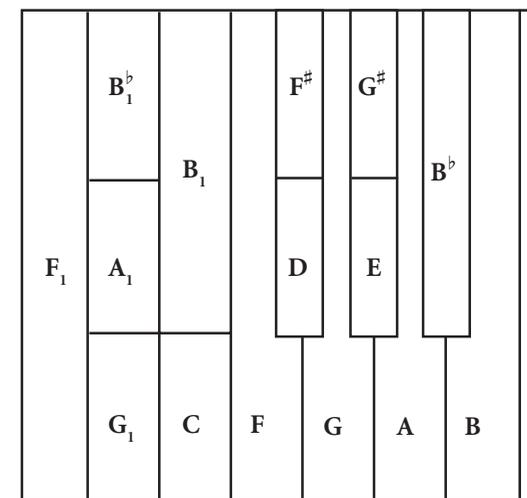


Figure 1 Viennese short octave configuration

documentary and in his video performance, the physicality of the *Sauschneider’s* unpleasant task finds its musical analogue in the Capriccio’s labor-intensive and cumbersome short octave passagework. Beghin suggests that Haydn’s insistence on the low D and E in mm. 352-358, marks the work’s humorous — if somewhat gruesome — denouement with a visual representation of the unlucky boar’s anatomy (see figures 1 and 2).

As mentioned above, the Capriccio was published by Artaria in 1788 over twenty years after it was written, with its idiosyncratic short octave passages (featuring left-hand chords that span a tenth, found in mm. 25-26; mm. 36-37; mm. 367-368) altered so as to be realizable on a fully chromatic keyboard. This wonderful piece loses nothing musically when played on a fully chromatic instrument, but one can agree with Beghin that one loses something of the *experience*, and thus the humor, of this piece without the short octave. The Leydecker is a fine instrument, with a somewhat tangy sound when both 8’s are coupled, but whose back 8’ has a beautifully luminous tone, as evidenced in lyrical movements such as Hob. XVI: 12/i. However, Beghin often has a propensity for playing very short notes, and one cannot help but be reminded of C.P.E. Bach’s description of some who play as though their fingers were getting burned. This is especially noticeable in the recordings of the French harpsichord in the Ceremonial Room at Esterháza, where one would think the generous acoustics of the “space” might prompt a fuller style of playing.

One of the real discoveries of this project is the Viennese Square Piano,

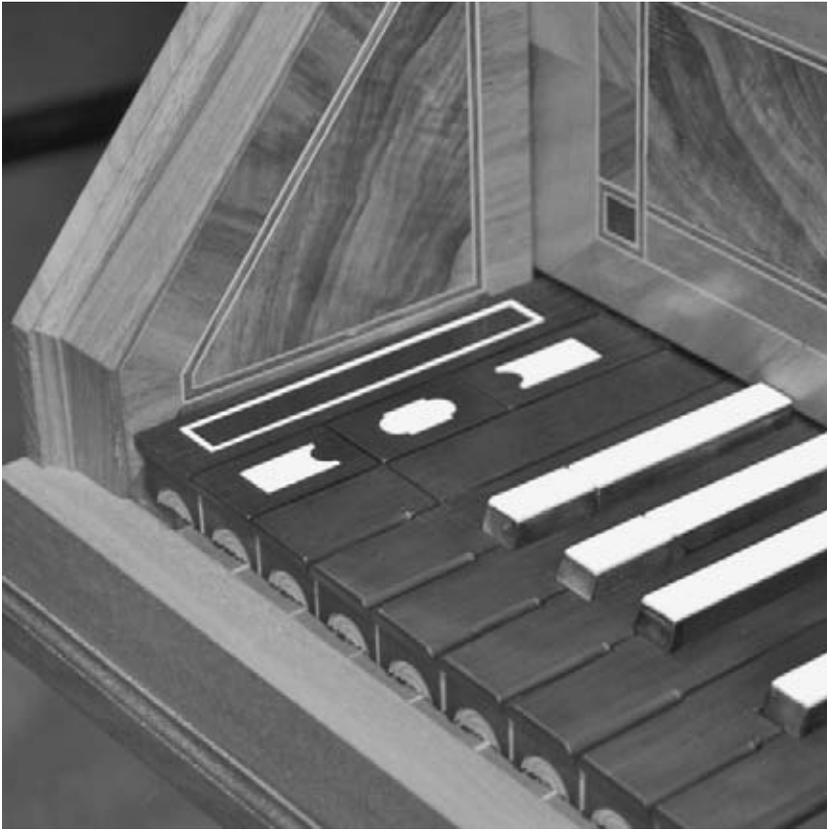


Figure 2 Replica of Leydecker harpsichord with Viennese short-octave, by Martin Pühringer

or *Tafelklavier* (see Figure 3). Viennese squares are noticeably different from their English counterparts in having a number of registers, or “mutation” stops (*Veränderungen*). Thus, the “*Pantalon*” stop on a Viennese instrument allows the players to raise all the dampers, in imitation of the *Pantaleon* or *Pantalon*, the large hammer dulcimer invented around 1697 and performed on across Europe to great acclaim by its inventor Pantaleon Hebenstreit. Hebenstreit later worked at the court of Dresden where the famous organ and fortepiano builder Gottfried Silbermann was responsible for the upkeep of his instrument; Silbermann would later add devices to his pianos that would lift the dampers making a radical change to his Cristofori model — one that became a well-loved feature of square pianos throughout Europe.

Beghin often uses the “undamped” register of the Kober replica to stunning



Figure 3 Replica of Kober Tafelklavier by Chris Maene

effect. This instrument also has a “moderator,” making it possible to combine the “*Pantalon*” (also referred to at this time as the “*Fortezug*”) and the moderator for an ethereal effect. Beghin chooses to record the “Anno 776” sonatas on the Kober replica, and it is here that we encounter some truly breathtaking “*Pantalon*” effects — in the Sonata in E-flat, Hob. XVI: 28, for example, and in the second movement of the Sonata in F, Hob. XVI: 29. However, Beghin, who often seems to revel in pushing the envelope, raises the dampers for the *entire* finale of the Sonata in B minor, Hob. XVI: 32, a movement that seems to cry out for a reading that employs rhythmic incisiveness and a dramatic use of silence. All the same, it is eye-opening to say the least to hear a Viennese square, for Beghin illustrates clearly that players of this instrument had many more color changes at their disposal than was previously known.

When we turn to the two-in-one Walter replica, it is fascinating to note that the “early” version, with *Stossmechanik* and hand-stops, actually has some tonal similarities with the Kober. It is an altogether lighter sound than the “late” version with *Prellmechanik* and knee-levers which Beghin only uses for one program (#9, “Viennese Culture”) recorded “at” the Lobkowitz Palace in Vienna.

An added bonus in this collection is that Beghin presents the Sonata in C minor, Hob. XVI: 20, and the Sonata in E-flat, Hob. XVI: 52 twice so that we may hear them in different guises. The Sonata in C minor, Hob. XVI: 20, is

performed on both fortepiano (the Walter, with the *Stossmechanik*) at the end of Program Seven (“Equal to the Finest Masters”), and on clavichord at the close of Program Four (“Haydn’s Workshop”). The Sonata in E-flat, Hob. XVI: 52, which was written for Haydn’s London acquaintance “The Celebrated” Therese Jansen Bartolozzi, but later published in Vienna with a dedication to Magdalena von Kurzböck, is performed on both the Walter and the Broadwood.

Technologically, Beghin’s project is cutting-edge, and perhaps something of a challenge for the buyer. To be released on Blu-ray instead of in the traditional CD format, the discs will contain a wealth of supplementary information and they offer a fascinating interactive experience: listeners may try each of the instruments in each of the rooms, so that where, for example, Beghin has chosen to play the French double manual harpsichord in the ceremonial room at Esterháza, the listener can choose to hear this instrument in one of the small parlors instead. Another component of this project is visual: there will be an accompanying documentary about the making of the project, as well as a photo gallery featuring the venues and instruments. Beghin and his team have to hope that Blu-ray becomes as ubiquitous as DVDs have become, and that people are ready for the upgrade. While CDs and DVDs can be ‘read’ by a Blu-ray player, the reverse is not true unless one uses a BD/DVD/CD compatible optical pickup unit.

For many owners of the older technologies, this situation is perhaps something like that experienced by eighteenth-century keyboard players who were told that the newest thing was the fortepiano, and that if they *really* wanted to experience the works of their favorite composers, they needed the new instrument. One thinks of the exchange between Haydn and his friend Marianne von Genzinger, for whom Haydn wrote the Sonata in E-flat, Hob. XVI: 49. After sending her the sonata, Haydn explained in a letter of June 27, 1790, that “I know I ought to have composed this sonata for your kind of keyboard” — it is clear from a few earlier sentences that he means harpsichord here — “but I found this impossible because I am no longer accustomed to it.”²¹ Many consumers balked at having to replace their beloved harpsichords with the newfangled instrument, and indeed, it took roughly ten years for the piano to gain dominance in the market. When forging ahead with new technologies, there must always be a brave few who decide to embrace the new modalities unequivocally, galvanizing everyone else to go along with them. Perhaps Beghin will convince us all that we need Blu-ray players to experience his groundbreaking effort, just as Haydn eventually convinced Frau Genzinger that she needed a fortepiano.

²¹ Haydn, *Gesammelte Briefe*, 242-243. Quoted in Rosenblum, *Performance Practices*, 21.