



(LEMS 8061)

## **HAYDN TRIOS**

### **THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER TRIO**

The Queen's Chamber Trio

Robert Zubrycki, violin

Peter Seidenberg, 'cello

Elaine Comparone, harpsichord

#### TRACKS:

C Major Trio

1. Allegro - 9:58

2. Andante - 6:13

3. Presto - 5:38

B flat Minor Trio

4. Andante - 10:56

5. Jacob's Dream - 4:37

E Major Trio

6. Allegro Moderato - 9:01

7. Allegretto - 3:40

8. Finale: Allegro 5:30

## A PERFORMER'S PERSPECTIVE by Elaine Comparone

Eighteen years before Johann Sebastian Bach's death in 1750, Franz Joseph Haydn was born into a German family of farmers in Rohrau, Austria. He outlived his younger colleague and friend Mozart by eighteen years and died in Vienna in 1809, eighteen years before the death of Beethoven, whom he taught. Haydn witnessed, experienced, absorbed and inspired manifold developments in compositional style and artistic taste during his long span, leaving his musical mark on the lives and work of both Mozart and Beethoven and countless other musicians of his time.

In 1761 he entered the service of the Esterházy family as Kapellmeister at Eisenstadt and remained there for thirty years under the patronage of Prince Paul and, later, his successor Prince Nikolaus, both passionate Haydn TRIOS music lovers. When Prince Nikolaus died in 1790, his successor dismissed the musicians, although Haydn kept his salary and Kapellmeister title. At the invitation of the Germanborn concert manager and violinist Johann Peter Salomon, he traveled to England where the royalty lionized and entertained him.

Charles Burney reviewed his first concert:

Haydn himself presided at the piano-forte; and the sight of that renowned composer so electrified the audience, as to excite an attention and a pleasure superior to any that had ever been caused by instrumental music in England.

Oxford University awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Music—a high point of the journey and of his life. Following his great artistic and commercial success in the island nation, Haydn agreed to return in 1794-95, with a commission from Salomon to compose six new symphonies.

During this visit, musicologists opine, Haydn composed the three keyboard trios identified in the Hoboken catalog as XV: 27 to 29. He dedicated them to his friend Therèse Jansen, whom Haydn listed in his first London notebook as one of the important keyboardists. (Haydn served as a witness at her wedding to the art dealer Gaetano Bartolozzi in May, 1795.) She submitted the trios for publication to Longman & Broderip and in 1797 L. & B. advertised the first edition. For this recording The Queen's Chamber Trio has chosen to perform two of these trios:

Trio in C Major (27) and Trio in E Major (28), separated by Haydn's two-movement Trio in E-flat minor (H. XV: 31). With apologies to CD collectors who prefer to own complete sets, we decided, for artistic reasons, to exclude the third member of this three-trio group (Trio in E-Flat Major, H.XV:29) and to include, instead, the Trio in E-flat minor. This two-movement trio has survived in Haydn's autograph. The Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) allusion to Jacob's dream of a ladder stretching up to heaven was Haydn's humorous attempt to cure a German amateur violinist of his propensity “invariably to play very high notes in the vicinity of the bridge.” The piece contains a number of unusually high pitches in the violin part.

The aesthetic awareness and consideration that guide our creation of live concert programs infiltrate our recordings as well. Heightened pleasure often comes from a juxtaposition of contrasting elements such as, in this case, major and minor keys, coupled

with another aspect, a dramatic change of character. After the jolly exuberance of the C Major Trio's final Presto, the soulful melancholy of the E-flat minor Trio's Andante takes us to a dramatically different emotional plain.

The E-flat minor Trio bears the designation *per il Cembalo* (for the harpsichord) for both movements, with the addition of *o p: f:* (or piano-forte) for the first. The outer bracketing Trios, on the other hand, appeared in their first printing in 1797 as Sonatas for the pianoforte, with an accompaniment for violin and violoncello. In the late 18th century the pianoforte gradually displaced the harpsichord, but the original editions of almost all of Beethoven's keyboard sonatas up to Opus 27 (1800- 01) bear the inscription: *Pour le Clavecin ou Pianoforte* (For the Harpsichord or Piano). Haydn prescribes harpsichord for his solo keyboard sonatas as late as his Sonata in E minor (H. XVI: 34), first published in 1784. In letters from March and April of 1789, he refers to his C Major Clavier Sonate (keyboard sonata)-a generic designation-while a first edition of Sonatas 14-16 (H. XVI: 40-42) bears the title *Trois Sonates pour le Pianoforte*. In his C Major Sonata, dedicated to Therèse Jansen-Bertolozzi and entitled *A Grand Sonata for the Piano-Forte* (completed in 1794-95 and published by Caulfield in 1801), the composer includes a middle movement (published by Artaria in 1794) with the title, *Adagio per Clavicembalo o Piano-Forte*.

All this shows that harpsichords were still widely used around 1800 and that music publishers were eager to accommodate the players and owners of the older instruments as well as those of the more modern ones.

Haydn's keyboard music is stylistically interchangeable between harpsichord and piano, except for the slight proliferation of dynamic directions, absent in most harpsichord music. (Johann Sebastian Bach, in his Concerto in the Italian Style, gave more detailed dynamic indications for a keyboardist than any of his predecessors.) In the first movement of the Trio in C Major, Haydn writes piano and forte dynamics, a tenuto, slurs, staccato marks and a crescendo symbol. A harpsichord does not allow the player to increase or decrease volume gradually by force on the keys, but a skillful harpsichordist can nonetheless render nuance-although, admittedly, not on the scale of the pianist's ability to do so. A resourceful harpsichordist can deliver the illusion of a crescendo by initiating a phrase on the upper, softer manual and bringing down the hands one at a time to the lower, louder manual. The alert listener will hear subtle harpsichord crescendo and diminuendo throughout this recording. Where the pianist has a damper pedal to enhance sonority, the harpsichordist has nothing of the kind. However, by holding down my fingers in different degrees, I can control the length of time of a plucked string's reverberation. In the lengthy broken chord passages that Haydn employs-especially in the first movements of the Trios in C and E Major-most pianists will use the damper pedal to create a sustained sound. The harpsichordist, having no sustaining or damper pedals, holds down notes in each harmony longer than their written value. In addition, because of our severely circumscribed ability to produce gradations in volume, we look to other means of varying the color of our sound, with articulation as our primary tool.

Why not merely play and record these pieces on a piano? As a harpsichordist, my major argument is that it has been done many times. Why not try a fresh approach? The harpsichord has a sound with unique acoustical qualities not shared by the modern or early pianos. Firstly, it blends better with stringed instruments than either the early or modern pianos and secondly, it does not drown them out. It may be softer than the other keyboards, but it makes its presence felt with a sparkle absent in piano sonority. I do not regard Early Music as the sole property of those who play antique instruments or replicas of antiques. Pianists who play modern grand pianos clearly share my opinion as is evidenced by their many performances and recordings of harpsichord music by Bach. But, at the same time, their performances of Mozart, Haydn and early Beethoven are farther away from the aural imaginings of these composers than harpsichord performances might be. Harpsichord sound stirs my imagination as piano sound never did. That is why I try to play whatever music lends itself to the instrument. As long as it is idiomatic, I will play it.

The relationship of the violin and 'cello to the keyboard in the Haydn trios is essentially a supportive one. The 'cello reinforces the bass-line, supporting the harmonic structure, while the violin accompanies with double-stops; complements the melody line played by the harpsichordist's right hand with doublings and counterpoint; and, makes occasional solo forays. While the C Major trio (dedicated by Haydn to Therèse Bertolozzi) is the most virtuosic of the works presented here and the E-flat minor the most lyrical, the E Major trio is perhaps the most interesting. What about the key of E Major inspires composers to such imaginative heights? (Listen to Mozart's late Trio in E Major, K.V. 542 on our recording of the 1788 trios for Lyrichord Discs.)

No composer has ever used the instrumental color that Haydn devised for the opening of his E Major trio's first movement: a sustained melodic line in the keyboardist's right hand accompanied by a staccato bass line, each reinforced by pizzicato doublings in the strings. The second movement is similarly unique, with a long solo passage for the keyboard, reminiscent of the serious, northern German style as exemplified in the music of Johann Sebastian and Carl Philip Emanuel Bach in his early days. The initial six bars provide a challenge in intonation control to the strings as they double the harpsichord at the unison. Zubrycki and Seidenberg meet the challenge masterfully, especially since they daringly eschew vibrato in this passage. (I encourage listeners to pay close attention to the way these players vary their use of vibrato throughout this recording, using it sparingly and expressively, not compulsively and automatically as do many of their colleagues; nor do they banish it from their palette altogether.) The final movement, replete with hemiola and agogic accent, displays Haydn's celebrated mastery of rhythm.

For their confidence in my ability to make this music sound on the harpsichord, I thank my talented and congenial colleagues Bob and Peter, who first launched the idea of exploring this repertoire. Their sensitivity to me, the music and to each other, their interpretive imaginations, and the unique musical personality that each expresses with consummate artistry through his instrument reflect their extraordinary qualities as human beings. I thank producer John Ostendorf for his deft, patient and entertaining management of the recording sessions and for his constant encouragement and friendship.

Thanks to Dan Czernycki and David Barnes for the artistic quality of their recording and to Stephen Epstein for his meticulous editing. Special thanks to Lyrichord President Nick Fritsch, whose faith in our artistic integrity propels our work. Finally, thanks to the Sheila Bakerman-Gilson Memorial Fund that makes possible all our music.

For this recording Elaine Comparone plays her 1968 replica of a 1720 Blanchet harpsichord built by William Dowd (Cambridge, Massachusetts) with a disposition of two sets of 8' strings, one set of 4' strings, a lute stop and hand coupler. Robert Zubrycki plays a literature with keyboard during the time when the fortepiano began to usurp the popularity of the harpsichord as the primary accompanying and solo keyboard instrument of the day. In the late 18th century, musicians who elected to play contemporary music on harpsichord instead of fortepiano might be categorized as reactionary, but in this day and age, the Trio's approach is decidedly revolutionary.

#### THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER TRIO

Violinist ROBERT ZUBRYCKI, cellist PETER SEIDENBERG and harpsichordist ELAINE COMPARONE form the core of The Queen's Chamber Band, a nine-member, New York City based ensemble that since 1996 has enriched Manhattan Island's cultural life with its annual concert series in major halls and churches. They created The Queen's Chamber Trio out of enjoyment of each other's musicianship experienced in The Queen's Chamber Band and love for the great trio literature commonly performed today on violin, cello and modern grand piano. The Queen's Chamber Trio made its New York debut at Carnegie's Weill Hall in September 2002 with a concert of music by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven entitled "A Viennese Threesome." In January 2006, Lyrichord Discs released the Trio's first recording (The 1788 Trios of Mozart) as a celebration of the 250th birthday of the composer and a featured item in the label's Early Music Series. The Queen's Chamber Trio takes as its raison d'être the perusal of chamber music 1700 violin made in Milan by Giovanni Battista Grancino and Peter Seidenberg plays a cello known as "Ex Romberg," made in Rome by David Tecchler in 1703.

#### CREDITS

Produced by John Ostendorf

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