

development, with its violin solos for Salomon in wildly contrasting keys, and the huge coda. Near the end, after what sounds like a pause for a cadenza, Haydn slows down the main theme with mock solemnity, and then decorates it with a 'cembalo [i.e. fortepiano] solo' for himself—an effect that doubtless brought the house down in 1792. ---Richard Wigmore, hyperion-records.co.uk

After No 99's premiere at the Hanover Square Rooms on 10 February, the Morning Chronicle wrote that 'it rouses and affects every emotion of the soul.—It was received with rapturous applause.' For the first time in a symphony Haydn was able to call on clarinets, whose presence is immediately felt in the slow introduction's majestically sonorous opening chord. Then, as the chord dies away, Haydn tellingly exploits the clarinet's deep, chalumeau register as a sustained bass to strings and bassoon. The introduction is Haydn's most harmonically adventurous to date, with an emphasis on mediant, or 'third-related', keys that will have repercussions later in the symphony. After a dramatic pause on a unison C flat, this note is enharmonically reinterpreted as B natural, heralding a brief excursion to the exotically remote key of E minor.

Repeated emphasis on the introduction's alien C flat gives a tangy, chromatic flavour to the Vivace assai's sweeping tuttis. Most striking, though, is the way the popular-style second subject, breezing in like an afterthought, gradually usurps the musical narrative. After dominating the development (which slips almost immediately to C major), it virtually crowds out the main theme from the recapitulation, generating one of those exhilarating expansions that led Tovey, rather misleadingly, to equate Haydn's recapitulations with Beethoven's codas.

'The effect of the wind instruments in the second movement was enchanting', wrote the Morning Chronicle, a reference to the beautiful contrapuntal elaboration of the opening theme by flute, oboes and bassoon. Set in the luminous, 'third-related' key of G major, this is music at once tender and exalted, with a dramatic, even anguished, development and a recapitulation that works the serene second theme to a disturbing climax replete with military-style fanfares. The powerfully symphonic minuet continues the work's 'mediant' tendency by setting its wistful Ländler trio in C major. Clarinets then oversee a subtle lead-back to the E flat of the minuet. The finale, initiated by another irresistibly catchy tune, is a tour de force of kaleidoscopic orchestral colouring (the 'second subject' fragments the melody between instruments, like a comical mini-concerto for orchestra) and contrapuntal brilliance. The young Beethoven, who learnt far more from Haydn than he ever admitted, was so impressed with the scintillating fugato at the centre of the movement that he copied it out for study. ---Richard Wigmore, hyperion-records.co.uk

Haydn - The 12 London Symphonies (Bernstein) CD3 [2003]

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