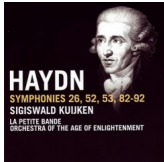


Haydn – Symphonies 26, 52, 53, 82 – 92 (2002)

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CD 1 Symphony No. 26 in D minor ('Lamentatione'), H. 1/26 1. I. *Allegro con spirito* 2. II. *Adagio* 3. III. *Menuet & trio*

[play](#)

Symphony No. 52 in C minor, H. 1/52

4. I. *Allegro con brio* 5. II. *Andante* 6. III. *Menuetto (Allegro) & trio* 7. IV. *Finale: Presto*

Symphony No. 53 in D major ('L'Impériale'/Festino'), H. 1/53

8. I. *Largo maestoso - Vivace* 9. II. *Andante* 10. III. *Menuetto & trio*

[play](#)

11. IV. *Finale: Capriccio - Moderato*

CD 2 Symphony No. 82 in C major ('The Bear'), H. 1/82

1. I. *Vivace assai* 2. II. *Allegretto* 3. III. *Menuet - Trio* 4. IV. *Finale: Vivace*

Symphony No. 83 in G minor ('The Hen'), H. 1/83

5. I. *Allegro spiritoso* 6. II. *Andante* 7. III. *Menuet: Allegretto - Trio* 8. IV. *Finale: Vivace*

Symphony No. 84 in E flat major ('In Nomine Domini'), H. 1/84

9. I. *Largo - Allegro* 10. II. *Andante* 11. III. *Menuet: Allegretto - Trio*

[play](#)

12. IV. *Finale: Vivace*

[play](#)

CD 3 Symphony No. 85 in B flat major ('La Reine'), H. 1/85

1. I. *Adagio - Vivace* 2. II. *Romance: Allegretto* 3. III. *Menuetto: Allegretto - Trio*

[play](#)

4. IV. *Finale: Presto*

[play](#)

Symphony No. 86 in D major, H. 1/86

5. I. *Adagio - Allegro spiritoso* 6. II. *Capriccio: Largo* 7. III. *Menuet: Allegretto - Trio* 8. IV. *Finale: Allegro con spirito*

Symphony No. 87 in A major, H. 1/87

9. I. *Vivace* 10. II. *Adagio* 11. III. *Menuet - Trio* 12. IV. *Finale: Vivace*

CD 4 Symphony No. 88 in G major ('Letter V'), H. 1/88

1. I. *Adagio - Allegro* 2. II. *Largo* 3. III. *Allegretto* 4. IV. *Allegro con spirito*

Symphony No. 89 in F major ('Letter W'), H. 1/89

5. I. *Vivace* 6. II. *Andante con moto* 7. III. *Menuet*

[play](#)

8. IV. *Vivace assai*

[play](#)

Symphony No. 92 in G major ('Oxford'/'Letter Q'), H. 1/92

9. I. *Adagio - Allegro spiritoso* 10. II. *Adagio* 11. III. *Allegretto* 12. IV. *Presto*

CD 5 Symphony No. 90 in C major ('Letter R'), H. 1/90

1. I. *Adagio - Allegro assai* 2. II. *Andante* 3. III. *Menuet*

[play](#)

4. IV. *Allegro assai*

[play](#)

Symphony No. 91 in E flat major ('Letter T'), H. 1/91

5. I. *Largo - Allegro assai* 6. II. *Andante* 7. III. *Menuet* 8. IV. *Vivace*

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment La Petite Bande Sigiswald Kuijken – conductor

It is a tribute to Sigiswald Kuijken and his two orchestras that Haydn's range and personality come across so strongly in this attractive 5CD set. Take the first disc, for example. The orchestra is the smaller of the two ensembles, La Petite Bande, the music the earliest among the collection. There are two emotionally charged Sturm und Drang (Storm and Stress) symphonies, Nos. 26 and 52, and one - No. 53 - which has an atmosphere of celebration.

These characteristics are the starting point for Kuijken's interpretations, and he is supported by the dedicated playing of his players (as he is too when the other orchestra (the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) is involved). The music of these three symphonies from the 1770s is strongly projected and carefully prepared, with tempi and phrasing which consistently allow for details to be heard while the line of musical continuity is maintained. If there is a caveat, applying to these three symphonies rather than the later ones, it is that the quality of the string sound may not appeal to all tastes. The string body is relatively small (why can't we be told how many players there are?) and the sound is neither comfortable nor particularly pleasing. There is nothing unintentional about this, it is merely a reflection of the sound of these musicians' gut strings.

In the later Symphonies played by this ensemble (Nos. 88-92) the string body seems more substantial, or at least the recorded perspective is more sensitive to string sound, and the issue recedes in importance. Indeed, these are highly successful interpretations of works which are frequently neglected, coming as they do in between the celebrated sets written for Paris and London. Kuijken's performances are ever alert, keenly shaped and phrased, with no lack of

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excitement. Symphony No. 91, hardly the best known among Haydn's works, emerges as a real masterpiece, with a substantial first movement involving a highly effective relationship between Largo introduction and sonata form Allegro. The set is worth acquiring for the performance of this symphony alone!

However, there are also two discs dedicated to the great Paris Symphonies that Haydn composed for Count D'Ogny in the mid-1780s. These were designed for a large and talented ensemble, and the atmospheric, clear and balanced sound achieved by the recording engineers allows for plenty of impact whenever it is required.

Kuijken directs spirited performances of the Paris Symphonies. The opening movement of Symphony No. 83 (The Hen) is particularly successful. The music is crisply articulated at the same time as being sensitively phrased. The orchestral playing is really first class, with a pleasing string tone which still achieves bite when the rhythms demand it. Could there be a better example of what Haydn meant by 'Allegro spiritoso'?

If the performance of this symphony has special qualities, the other Paris symphonies are not far behind either. Each of them communicates its own special personality. For instance, in Kuijken's hands the somewhat neglected Symphony No. 84 in E flat has a thoughtful, almost introspective air in the outer movements, whereas the minuet is lively and strongly accented.

Keyboard continuos in the Paris performances are present but very discrete and unobtrusive; perhaps this is something of a surprise, though it is not a problem. The string band numbers some 25 players, and generates sufficient body of sound to provide a suitable warmth of expression whenever Haydn calls for it. Likewise woodwinds, brass and timpani acquit themselves with distinction, helped by the clarity of the recorded sound.

Caveats are few indeed. One is the tempo chosen for the Allegretto movement of Symphony No. 85 (La Reine), which is surely too slow and would be more safely described as an Andante, which Haydn presumably did not want.

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