

Haydn: Five Sonatas & Capriccio



Joanna Leach

Stodart square piano of 1823

HAYDN

Five Sonatas & Capriccio

Sonata in D major, Hob.XVI/37	12:29
1 I. <i>Allegro con brio</i>	5:09
2 II. <i>Largo e sostenuto</i>	3:51
3 III. <i>Presto ma non troppo</i>	3:28
Sonata in C sharp minor, Hob.XVI/36	14:16
4 I. <i>Moderato</i>	6:15
5 II. <i>Scherzando allegro con brio</i>	3:34
6 III. <i>Minuet & Trio: Moderato</i>	4:26
Sonata in F major, Hob.XVI/23	16:20
7 I. <i>[untitled]</i>	5:18
8 II. <i>Adagio</i>	8:14
9 III. <i>Finale: Presto</i>	2:48
Sonata in E minor, Hov.XVI/34	13:47
10 I. <i>Presto</i>	4:31
11 II. <i>Adagio</i>	5:30
12 III. <i>Vivace molto</i>	3:45
Sonata in D major, Hob.XVI/51	5:32
13 I. <i>Andante</i>	3:36
14 II. <i>Finale: Presto</i>	1:55
15 Capriccio in FG major, Hob.XVII	8:29
"Acht Sauschneider müssen seyn"	
Total playing time:	71:07

Haydn: Five Sonatas & Capriccio

With the exception of a few favourites mainly used as teaching material, Haydn's piano sonatas were seldom played until comparatively recently since as a composer he was considered inferior to Mozart. This was not the opinion of his contemporaries, or Mozart himself, who was a great admirer of Haydn and valued their close friendship. Haydn also held Mozart in the highest esteem, describing him as "incomparable". The two often played chamber music together and Haydn enjoyed hearing Mozart play the piano. A contemporary source wrote that "Haydn and Mozart were like brothers. Mozart delighted in Haydn's writing and owned repeatedly that he was much indebted to him in forming his style". Fortunately for us Haydn's music has now become widely available and we are able to appreciate him for the great composer he was.

Many of Haydn's piano sonatas are by no means inferior to Mozart's greatest keyboard works. Mozart's piano concertos were composed mainly for his own public performances and for the blind pianist Maria Theresia von Paradies. They express his depth of feeling and imagination far more than his solo sonatas, many of which were probably written for his amateur pupils. Haydn was not a virtuoso pianist himself but this did not prevent him from writing music that required a high degree of pianistic ability and interpretative skill. The works chosen here show some of the wide range of expression Haydn achieved.

The first two sonatas on this disc were part of a set of six mostly written during 1777-1780 and dedicated to Caterina and Marianna von Auenbrugger. Haydn wrote that the sisters possessed "genuine insight into music equal to that of the greatest masters".

The affirmative and brilliant first movement of the **Sonata in D major (Hob. 37)** is followed by a *Largo sostenuto* that recalls the stately sarabande of Händel's time. This leads directly into a lively rondo marked *innocentemente*. Haydn's peasant roots are revealed in his love of the country dances that were a rich part of rural life and inspired his charming rondo movements. He was born the son of a wheelwright in Rohrau, a small village in the eastern part of Austria, not far from Hungary and what is now Slovakia, all of which at that time being part of the Habsburg Empire.

The powerful opening of the **Sonata in C sharp minor (Hob. 36)** has a declamatory *Sturm und Drang* theme. *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) describes the poetic movement reflected in all the arts, reaching its height in the 1770s, and can be defined as the passionate expression of highly charged emotions. The sudden outbursts and mood swings in the first movement of this sonata exploit to the full the dynamic range of the fortepiano. The second movement is a gracious *scherzando* rondo in A major with variations on the theme each time it appears. The last movement is an expressive minuet and trio. The minuet is based on an old folk tune, probably of Hungarian origin.

The **Sonata in F major (Hob. 23)** was composed in 1773, several years earlier than the D major and C sharp minor sonatas. It is one of a set of six dedicated to his employer and patron Prince Nicolaus Esterházy. There are no dynamic markings, possibly indicating that Haydn expected these six sonatas to be usually be performed on a harpsichord. Haydn himself much preferred his works to be played on a fortepiano, and well before 1773 he had already written specifically for this new instrument and included original dynamic markings impossible to realise on a harpsichord. An example is the C minor sonata (Hob. 20) composed in 1771). The vivacious first movement of the F major opens with a march-like theme and develops into an expressive second subject. The *Adagio* second movement has a gentle 6/8 *siciliano* accompaniment and the melodic line is ornamented in a manner that suggests Haydn's inspiration was the operatic aria. The third movement is a bold, good humoured *presto* that has much in common with Haydn's later symphonic finales. The theme is presented with subtle differences in articulation at each entry and is interspersed with energetic semiquaver passages. The endings of each main section are thrown away with an almost cheeky casualness. Haydn seems to be one of the few composers who can be humorous without sounding self-conscious.

The well-known **Sonata in E minor (Hob. 34)** was published in London in 1784. Haydn treats the minor tonality in a very different way from the *Sturm und Drang* of some of his earlier minor key works. The first movement, although marked *presto*,

does not take kindly to being rushed. It begins almost lyrically with only a hint of the restless dark character which underlies some of the writing. Haydn contrasts brilliant passages with others in a more gentle, introspective mood. The G major *Adagio* is an aria-inspired movement beginning with an ornamented theme broken into separate phrases which gradually develops into long runs. One can hear the moments when the 'soprano' would have taken a quick breath. The movement ends on the dominant of E minor and continues without a break into the *Vivace molto* of the final movement. This is another *innocentemente* dance rondo with two episodes which themselves are variants of the main theme. The infectious gaiety, sparkling ornaments and touches of humour justify its popularity. Perhaps a pre-echo of Pappageno's voice can be heard at the end of the second episode and also near the end of the movement, although in fact Haydn composed this sonata at least nine years before Mozart wrote his opera *The Magic Flute*.

Haydn first came to England in 1791, arriving on New Year's Day and staying until July 1792. He then returned for another visit (January 1794 - August 1795). He was full of admiration for the English pianos with their extra strength, resonance and beautiful sonorous tone. This was a strong influence on his keyboard compositions from then on. These included his last three sonatas, published as *Drei Englische Sonaten* (Three English Sonatas), the Variations in F minor and many piano trios.

The **Sonata in D major (Hob. 51)** is one of the Three English Sonatas, dedicated to the distinguished pianist Therese Jansen, who married the famous engraver Bartolozzi. Haydn, who was a friend of the family, gave her away at her wedding. The D major is not often heard having been somewhat overshadowed by the other longer and more virtuosic English sonatas, in C and E flat. It is a two movement work, completely different from any of his other sonatas in form as well as content. The first movement explores in full the resonance of the English pianos and has a second subject which looks forward to Schubert. The *presto* finale is nervous and excitable – its forward thrust is emphasised by frequent accents that throw the beat from the given 3/4 into a 2/4 metre.

The famous music shop of Broadwood put a room at Haydn's disposal where he could compose. He was enthusiastically welcomed by the English public and we are told by Griesinger, who knew Haydn personally, that "he considered the days spent in England the happiest of his life. He was everywhere appreciated there, it opened a new world for him, and he could, through his rich earnings, at last escape the restricted circumstances in which he had grown grey." These new financial benefits meant he was able to buy a splendid Longman and Broderip piano and have it shipped to Austria.

The **Capriccio (Hob. XVII/1)** subtitled *Acht Sauschneider müssen seyn* was composed in 1765, but not published until 1788. Haydn would have had access to a fortepiano as early as 1765 and H.C. Robbins Landon suggests that this work may have

been written specifically for the new instrument. Haydn was a great admirer of C.P.E. Bach and the *Sauschneider* Capriccio is based on Bach's monothematic rondo form which characteristically uses numerous key changes. There are eleven of these in Haydn's Capriccio which takes an old Bavarian folk song as its theme. The influence of Haydn's peasant background – so different from Mozart's urban and sophisticated upbringing – is evident in this down-to-earth piece. The folk song itself is a rather coarse farmer's song and one can imagine the beer flowing freely and numerous voices gradually joining in. The dialect words begin:

Eahna achte muassen's seyn
Wanns' an saubarn wolln schneidn
Zwoa voran, zwoa hintn
Zwoa schneidn, zwoa binden

It takes eight of you
If you want to castrate a boar
Two in front and two behind
Two to cut and two to bind

The momentum gradually builds with a feeling of increasing effort until with a flourish everything comes to a brief halt before a vigorous coda brings the work to a close. *Fine laus Deo* wrote Haydn at the end of the final page.

We rarely hear any of the operas Haydn composed for the court of his patron Prince Esterházy. Many of them were destroyed

during a fire at the prince's Eszterháza palace in Hungary and of those remaining, although the music is often very fine, the librettos are weak and unconvincing. However many diverse 'characters' can be found in his instrumental works. When I first played Haydn on a sensitively restored period piano I was amazed to find these operatic voices suddenly springing vividly to life. This is due to the different timbres in the separate registers of the keyboard on authentic instruments, sometimes smoothed out and made more 'consistent' in reproductions. I wanted to present the works on this disc on an English square piano which to my mind illuminates them in a more exciting way than when they are played on a modern instrument.

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Stodart square piano, c.1823

This is a five and a half octave piano with double action and crank dampers. The sustaining mechanism by this period is invariably pedal operated. The hammer coverings, made of soft leather, are an important factor in producing the characteristic tone quality. The firm Stodart, founded 1775, was an important one in the development and manufacture of the piano, making many top quality instruments.

© 1992, Andrew Lancaster

Piano restoration: Andrew Lancaster

Tuning: Martin Ness

a' = 415 Hz

Recording Engineer: Mike Beville

Cover photo: Mike Beville

(Joanna Leach in the courtyard of Haydn's house at Eisenstadt)

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Recordings by Joanna Leach on square pianos

23001 (ATHCD1)

"Three Square" : John Field Nocturnes

Broadwood 1823, D'Almaine 1835, Stodart 1823

"Leach coaxes poetic sounds and plays this repertoire very sensitively"

- Penguin Guide to Compact Discs



23002 (ATHCD2)

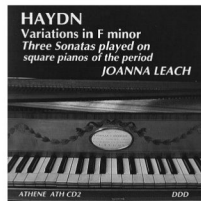
Haydn: Four Sonatas & Variations in F minor

Astor c.1800, Broadwood 1789,

Longman & Broperip 1787, Stodart 1823

"...the result is deceptively seductive and engrossing. Lovingly played...simply magical."

- Penguin Guide to Compact Discs



23003 (ATHCD3)

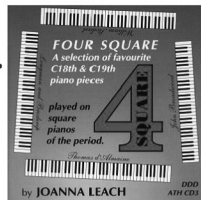
"Four Square": recital – Chopin, Schubert, Soler, etc.

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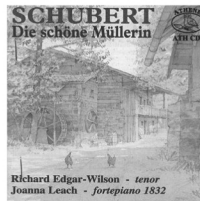
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"it is rare that a singer can cope with the technical demands, and yet still sound so convincingly surprised by the turn of events"

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Piano Sonata : Élégie Harmonique

Clementi 1832

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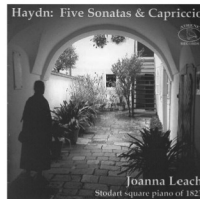


23022 (ATHCD22)

Haydn: Five Sonatas & Capriccio

Stodart 1823

"One cannot but enjoy this disc." - Kirk McElhearn (MusicWeb)





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