

Trio no.43 in C (Hob XV27)

Joseph Haydn

(1732-1809)

Allegro
Andante
Presto

On New Year's Day, 1791, the 59 year-old Haydn crossed the Channel from Calais and arrived in England. It was the culmination of many efforts to persuade him to come, particularly those of the promoter Salomon. He it was who, touring Europe in the search for soloists for his next season, had heard of the death of Haydn's employer, Prince Nicholas Esterházy, and had immediately set off for Vienna, where he arrived at Haydn's house with the words "I am Salomon from London and have come to fetch you. Tomorrow we shall conclude an agreement".

One is so much in awe of the music that was being produced in Vienna at the turn of the eighteenth century that one might think of London as relatively unmusical, but it was of course brimming with music, even if most of it was imported. There was an enthusiastic audience for Haydn's works, extending to the King himself, and the first visit was so successful that Haydn was back for another three years later. The set of three piano trios, of which the C major trio is the first, date from the second visit, and represents the last of Haydn's output in the trio form. It was dedicated to Theresa Jansen, the daughter-in-law of the engraver Francesco Bartolozzi and a pianist of apparently no mean talent, for the demands of the piano part are considerable, Haydn having been eager to capitalise on the technical improvements of the new Broadwood pianos to the full. Theresa may even have been granted exclusive performing rights, for publication was delayed for several years.

The leitmotif of the first movement is a succession of rising arpeggios, exploding out of a declamatory chord. This device tends to bring the music back to brisk order whenever it gets a bit introspective, and gives it renewed momentum. The song-like *andante* is similarly subjected to some sudden changes in dynamics which perhaps presage Haydn's most gifted, if unappreciative, pupil, Beethoven. But the movement ends tranquilly enough. The finale is Haydn at his fizziest, with the piano in full Gypsy-rondo mode and violin and cello generally playing second and third fiddle, although there are some fine ensemble flourishes.