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Haydn’s “Farewell” Symphony:  
the Musical Aftermath of an Anecdote

Christine Siegert

Unlike the situation concerning e.g. Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven or Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, the compositional response to Haydn’s oeuvre has up to this point only scarcely been investigated.1 Nevertheless, composers have shown a general interest in Haydn’s music, particularly his more prominent works. Such interest notably increased during the twentieth century, perhaps sparked by the 1909 centennial Haydn tribute made by a group of French composers, each writing works on his name.2 Jean Françaix, e.g., wrote his Onze variations sur un thème de Haydn (1982) based on the Surprise Symphony; the Austrian composer Hans Erich Apostel seemed deeply impressed by the Drumroll Symphony, which he reflected upon in no fewer than three compositions: the “Variations on a Haydn Theme” op. 17 (1949), the Fünf österreichische Miniaturen (Five Austrian Miniatures, 1961), and the Paralipomena dodekaphonika op. 44 (1969/70). Friedrich Zehm alluded to the Symphony “The Clock” when he humorously asked with the title of his four-hand piano piece: Wie spät ist es, Signor Haydn? (What time is it, Mr. Haydn?, 1980).3 Robert Simpson wrote two variation cycles (Variations and Finale on a Theme of Haydn for piano, 1948, and 32 Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Haydn for string quartet, 1982) on the palindrome-theme Haydn himself used twice: in the minuet of Symphony Hob. I:47 and in the Piano Sonata Hob. XVI:26.4 Among the eighteen compositions for piano trio commissioned by the Haydn Festspiele Eisenstadt for the Haydn commemoration 2009, we find connections to the trio Hob. XV:28 in Elisabeth Harnik’s work schatten.risse (the title is a play on the word “Schattennrisse” – “silhouettes” on the one hand, and on “Schatten” – “shadow” and “Risse” – “breaks” on the other hand). Gernot Schedlberger recalls the Symphony
Hob. I:102 in his Übermalung 1 (Repaint 1); Gerhard Krammer follows in ...und licht... the beginning of The Creation, which is also the basis for Xiaogang Ye’s Piano Trio op. 59. Even Haydn’s lesser-known works are explored, e.g. Edison Denissow’s “Variations for Violoncello and Orchestra” on Haydn’s canon “Tod ist ein langer Schlaf” (Death is a Long Repose, 1982), Peter Maxwell Davies’ Strathclyde Concerto no. 5 (1991), which uses the overture of L’isola disabitata, and Peter Ruzicka’s Metamorphosen über ein Klangfeld von Joseph Haydn (Metamorphoses on an Acoustic Field by Joseph Haydn, 1990) on the oratorio version of Die sieben letzten Worte (The Seven Last Words).

Two of Haydn’s works seem to occupy a special position in the history of Haydn reception among composers: The very diverse and problematic political functions associated with the anthem “Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser,” written during the war against revolutionary France and first set in arrangements by Haydn himself, gave it particular appeal. Whereas Clara Wieck, later Schumann, was able to use the hymn in her Souvenir de Vienne op. 9 (1838) as a musical reference to the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy after being appointed “k. k. Kammervirtuosin,” during the First World War it was used in patriotic pieces like Max Reger’s Vaterländische Ouvertüre (Patriotic Overture), dedicated to the German army, and in his overture “Aus ernster Zeit” (From Serious Times) op. 56, Felix Weingartner confronted Haydn’s anthem and the German hymn “Heil Dir im Siegerkranz” with a caricature version of the Marseillaise. In 1933 and the years after many bombastically affirmative arrangements of the so-called German Song were made. In light of such Austro- and Germano-centric politically charged uses, other modern composers have taken different, even oppositional critical attitudes towards Haydn’s hymn. An early example of such opposition is Béla Bartók’s symphonic poem Kossuth (1903), in which the composer presents a grotesque, deformed version of the hymn,
symbolizing the cruelties of the Habsburg rulers against the Hungarian freedom fighters. Schoenberg’s arrangement of Johann Strauss Jr.’s *Emperor Waltz* (1925), which includes some fragments of the hymn as a countermelody, was considered by Zoë Lang as a “political statement opposed to radicalism in the Austrian government at the time.” The second Haydn work that has enjoyed a very distinctive compositional reception, and on which the remainder of this essay will focus, is the *Farewell Symphony* (Hob. I:45).

1. *Early and modern influences of the “Farewell Symphony”*

Haydn’s first biographer, Georg August Griesinger, related the following well-known anecdote about the symphony’s première:

Unter der Kapelle des Fürsten

Esterhazy befanden sich mehrere junge, rüstige Ehemänner, die im Sommer, wo sich der Fürst auf seinem Schlosse Esterhazy aufhielt, ihre Weiber in Eisenstadt zurück lassen mussten.

Gegen seine Gewohnheit wollte der Fürst einst den Aufenthalt in Esterhazy um mehrere Wochen verlängern; die zärtlichen Eheleute, äußerst bestürzt über diese Nachricht, wandten sich an Haydn, und baten ihn, Rath zu schaffen.

In Prince Esterházy’s orchestra were several vigorous young married men who in summer, when the Prince stayed at Esterháza castle, had to leave their wives behind in Eisenstadt. Contrary to his custom, the Prince once wished to extend his stay at Esterháza by several weeks. The fond husbands, especially dismayed at this news, turned to Haydn and pleaded with him to do something.
Haydn kam auf den Einfall, eine Symphonie zu schreiben, (die unter dem Namen Abschieds-Symphonie bekannt ist) in welcher ein Instrument nach dem andern verstummt. Diese Symphonie wurde bey der ersten Gelegenheit in Gegenwart des Fürsten aufgeführt, und jeder von den Musikern war angewiesen, so wie seine Partie geendiget war, sein Licht auszulöschen, die Noten zusammen zu packen, und mit seinem Instrumente unter dem Arme fortzugehen. Der Fürst und die Anwesenden verstanden den Sinn dieser Pantomime sogleich, und den andern Tag erfolgte der Befehl zum Aufbruch von Esterház.\textsuperscript{12}

The singular characteristic of this piece would seem to be the details of its first performance, which Griesinger appropriately labels a “pantomime.”\textsuperscript{14} According to his version of the anecdote, there was a combination of two elements: the progressive darkening of the room caused by players blowing out their candles, and the progressive emptying of the stage as players exited.\textsuperscript{15}

This pantomime seems to have inspired other composers almost immediately: In his foundational monograph on the *Farewell Symphony*, James Webster notes
such inspiration regarding Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf’s symphony “Il ridotto” which “concludes with a fast 3/8 movement which gradually slows down as the players leave, ending with two solo violins,” and regarding the Sinfonia Quodlibet by Paul Wranitzky, in which the players enter and leave. The composer and double bass player Johannes Sperger, a pupil of Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, entitled his Grande Sinfonie in F major (1796) “Ankunftssinfonie,” and Giuseppe Carpani reports that a symphony by Ignaz Pleyel creates the impression that the players have joined the concert late.

Twentieth-century composers have been especially fascinated by Haydn’s Farewell Symphony for a variety of reasons. Their compositions can be interpreted as evincing the characteristics of the Farewell Symphony itself as well as its anecdotal “pantomime”—some reflect the musical structure of Haydn’s work, others turn the musician’s departure and/or the light’s extinction into performance actions, and still others allude to the Farewell Symphony in a metaphorical way. Analysis of Frank Corcoran’s Farewell Symphonies, Jindrich Feld’s Capricci, Kirke Mechem’s Haydn’s Return, Dieter Schnebel’s Haydn-Destillate, Alfred Schnittke’s First Symphony and moz-art à la haydn, Jörn Arnecke’s Unter Eis, George Crumb’s Night of the Four Moons and Arnold Schoenberg’s Second String Quartet will exemplify this framework of possible modes of compositional response. For such interpretation of a work as alluding to the Farewell Symphony to have validity, it is necessary to include a combination of various types of evidence; a single indicator would not be sufficient. Consequently, the analysis contained herein reveals a wide range of possible understandings and compositional attitudes towards each work’s mutual goal: shedding new and varied light onto the Farewell Symphony itself.
2. Reflecting the Musical Structure: Frank Corcoran, “Farewell Symphonies”

Sometimes, composers indicate the relationship to Haydn with the title of their work. This is the case with the Farewell Symphonies for orchestra, tape and speaker by the Irish composer Frank Corcoran, commissioned by Radio Ireland for the Prix d’Italia 1982. It was probably the Haydn year that inspired the composer to incorporate some Haydn allusions in the text, written by Corcoran himself, as well as in the music. From the beginning, the speaker evokes a grotesque scenery: “All gone, down the Western edge of. Fading diplomatic battles fought with WHO?—remember the storks best, flat fish of Neusiedler See. Damn Western edge.—kept the reports flowing back, right to the end: Dublin never complained on that score. Guard those batteries at all cost! A last stroll around the lough before.”

The Neusiedler See, where the castle Eszterháza is situated, is certainly not mentioned by chance in this prominent passage, which forms the basis of all the following textual interpolations. The first words “All gone” reflect the notion of “Farewell” and the expression “Fading diplomatic battles” could be interpreted as the reading of the anecdote as a diplomatic act by Haydn towards Prince Nicolaus. The emphasis “that score” has a triple meaning: It probably evokes Haydn’s symphony and Corcoran’s piece and might also be understood as the sound of the battles mentioned in the text. Perhaps primarily, Corcoran alludes to the musical element of Haydn’s symphony which he is mostly interested in: the fading out. From the very beginning, Corcoran establishes the fading out as the central musical element of his piece.

In this single-movement composition, the instruments have different tempo indications (second flute and second oboe quarter note = c. 184, first flute quarter note = c. 160, first trombone quarter note = c. 120, first oboe quarter note = c. 108, third trombone quarter note = c. 88, first and second clarinet quarter note = c. 84,
bassoon and second trombone quarter note = c. 66, first and second horn quarter note = c. 44). The strings have no tempo indication; they are reduced to a single pizzicato chord. The timpani, one of the instruments with the slowest tempo indication (quarter note = c. 60), remains alone on the very first page, ending pianissimo with a drumroll poco ritardando. With the second entry, this process is amplified. Corcoran repeats this structure several times, so there is a sequence of varied manners of beginning and fading out. This repetitive structure musically evokes the feeling of an inevitable and never-ending situation. The multiple fading out is not the result of a process, but it is the essence of the structure itself. This is probably the reason why Corcoran has given his one-movement composition the plural title Farewell Symphonies.

3. Moving: Jindřich Feld, “Introduzione all’entrata dei musicisti”

Presumably the most striking element in the first performance of Haydn’s symphony seems to be the musicians’ leaving the stage. Like in the old performance materials of the symphony where the leaving is indicated with “geht ab” or “si parte,” some works are characterized by stage directions and indications of stage positioning. One example is Night of the Four Moons by George Crumb in which all players, except the cellist, are moving for the epilogue music to an offstage position. Before they exit, they go to a single crotale, indicating with a single beat their leaving.

In 1964, the Czech composer Jindřich Feld had the same idea as Wranitzky and Sperger: he inverted the moving in his Capricci for woodwind quartet and guitar, a piece destined for the educational concerts of the Prague Wind Quartet for young people. In the first movement, “Introduzione all’entrata dei musicisti,” the
musicians enter the stage one by one. They start improvising, being integrated into the musical process when they have reached their place.

At the beginning, the guitarist is alone on stage; his initial eight-bar passage of undulated quarter notes is repeated, and at the moment the repetition starts, the bassoonist enters the stage, improvising. When the eight bars repetition is over, the bassoonist begins to play the music as written, adding a syncopated rhythm in mainly stepwise motion; the guitar is continuing its phrase. With the next repetition, the oboist enters the stage; first, like everybody else, improvising, then, playing in large intervals, with half notes at the beginning of the passage. Finally, the clarinetist and the flutist enter, giving the piece a more vivid character with their eighth notes and triplets. When everybody has joined the group, the movement passes into a pseudo-coda, where the eight-bar repetitions conclude. This is a very appropriate beginning for an educational concert, because it allows each player to present his or her instrument and its specific sound. The humorous, perhaps ironic piece ends harmonically farthest away from Haydn’s F-sharp tonic, with a fortissimo C major chord, a dramatic contrast to Haydn’s model.

The following movements, “Serenata interrotta” (Interrupted Serenade) and “Intermezzo di riconciliazione” (Intermezzo of reconciliation), are devoid of any moving actions; they can be related to the anecdote of the Farewell Symphony only marginally. In the “Finale twist” any connection to Haydn has completely disappeared. However, the ironic character of Capricci might be linked to the humorous aspects of Haydn’s symphony. Having the pedagogical purposes in mind, the composer stresses the importance of the piece’s performative nature: “Skladbě prospěje živá, temperamentní reprodukce, případně i s jemným mimickým zdůrazněním humorného a parodistického obsahu.” (“A lively performance full of temperament and with an occasional hint of a mimic emphasis is desirable.”)\textsuperscript{28}
4. Thinking Ahead: Kirke Mechem, “Haydn’s Return”

Kirke Mechem’s Opus 18, *Haydn’s Return: Fugue and Variations on the “Farewell” Symphony* (1960), is fairly close to Feld’s musical and pedagogical ideas, but goes much farther. Mechem starts with a retrograde version of the last bars of the Adagio epilogue of Haydn’s symphony. Then every instrument enters playing the theme of a fugue, beginning with the first stand of the viola, followed by the two remaining first violins and two stands of the second violin. The violins grow up to five stands (ten players) each. When the violoncellos and contrabasses as well as the oboes, bassoons and horns have reached their place, they begin to play the first eight bars of Haydn’s Presto Finale (in A minor instead of F-sharp minor). With this phrase, they start a double exposition of the theme and the first variation: The first eight bars establish the theme, the following eight bars begin the first variation, then the theme continues. Mechem does not use bars 9-16 of Haydn’s symphony, a repetition of the first eight bars with a reduced orchestra, but continues with bar 16 of his model, interrupted after sixteen bars by a sudden general pause. After fourteen bars of variation, based on the unison motive of bars 40-42 of Haydn’s symphony, but with the violins rhythmically moved one respectively two beats forward, Mechem returns to Haydn’s music at bar 45 and follows it (shortened by two bars) up to the double bar. At the end of this 57-bar complex of Theme and Variation I, it becomes clear why Mechem has set this part in A minor: Haydn ends his 56-bar exposition in A major and Mechem did not want to follow his modulation. For the following variations, further instruments enter the stage, mostly indicating their arrival with a solo passage: clarinets, two more horns, harp, flutes (including piccolo), trombones, tuba and percussion, trumpets and timpani. In the coda, “accelerando poco a poco,” Mechem once more makes the orchestra sound grow with a powerful crescendo from
piano to fortissimo to a final “Stringendo” tutti section closing, with an accentuated A major chord.

Similar to Feld’s *Capricci*, “HAYDN’S RETURN was designed for community orchestras, ‘Pops’ and Youth concerts.” But whereas Feld’s “Introduzione” is the first movement of a cyclic work, and the only movement in the piece directly related to the Haydn model, Mechem intended his piece to be an immediate juxtaposition to the Haydn model: “HAYDN’S RETURN is intended to follow immediately after a performance of the last movement of Haydn’s ‘Farewell’ Symphony (No. 45 in F-sharp minor). In Haydn’s work, the players leave one by one, the last measures being played by only two violinists. In this ‘sequel’, they return.” This dramaturgy stresses the augmentation of the orchestra, i.e. the return seems to be more powerful than the leaving. Because of the large amount of material from the *Farewell Symphony* used so directly in *Haydn’s Return*, from a musical standpoint it is the closest to Haydn’s model of all compositions analyzed here. At the same time, Haydn’s definite ending—which has a future perspective only due to the anecdote—becomes a transitional stage. *Haydn’s Return* might therefore be understood as a manifestation of the success of Haydn’s musico-political initiative.

5. Other Pantomime Elements: Dieter Schnebel, “Haydn-Destillate”

The element of motion associated with the *Farewell Symphony* seems to be a central influence in Dieter Schnebel’s *Haydn-Destillate* (Haydn Distillations) for piano trio, one of the works commissioned for Eisenstadt’s 2009 bicentennial celebration. Schnebel has always been particularly interested in producing a musical idea of space (e.g. in his *Bach-Contrapuncti*) and in actions by the players (e.g. in the *Verdi-Momente* from *Re-Visionen II* or *Orchestra* for mobile musicians). He has
highlighted the importance of the physical gesture in his theory of a “visible music”.\textsuperscript{32}

As Schnebel’s himself has pointed out, \textit{Haydn-Destillate} primarily refers to the finale of the String Quartet in E-flat major, op. 33/2, “The Joke”:


The finale of Haydn’s String Quartet op. 33, also known as ‘The Joke’, is in two respects bold and ahead of its time. Firstly as a first piece of minimal music: an eight-bar theme in frantic 6/8 time, consisting of four groups which are all variants of the first, and which in turn consist of four motives, again variants of the first. The first group can signify a beginning as well as an end. [...] Thus a breathless bustling game of the variants of the variants of the variants, in which one immediately loses every sense of direction—at best the seven beginnings of the a-8-bar theme builds the continuous whirling.
However Haydn’s finale is a repetitive piece of constant irritation—a furious madness. The fact that on the one hand one may understand the insane work adequately as a joke because of its continuous madness, is on the other hand probably also resistance to it, as in every joke there is also something sinister tucked away. This piece however is without beginning and without end (something which is of course only noticed in retrospect). But that seems indeed to be a joke—and on that account is profoundly funny. Where possible the Destillate also deal with this.

Haydn’s famous string quartet—like almost the whole op. 33 cycle—plays with the notion of beginning and ending, and in this respect is closely related to the *Farewell Symphony*. Therefore, it seems quite suitable that Schnebel integrates some performative elements, such as appear in Haydn’s oeuvre only in the *Farewell Symphony*. Schnebel’s tempo indications correspond to Haydn’s: The second movement, called “Finale: Presto” leads after a long fermata to a short Adagio segment, before, once more after a long fermata, ending as a *pianissimo* Presto (in
the *Farewell Symphony*, the ultimate Presto is missing for obvious reasons). This Presto, constantly quoting the string quartet, is characterized by sudden changes of playing and freezing of the players. At the very end, the dynamic level is reduced to *ppp*, and Schnebel introduces a new performance element: the players have to make themselves small while still playing (“sich klein machen beim Spiel”). After the two last bars, they freeze once more for a long time and then collapse (“zusammensinken”). If we agree to put Schnebel’s *Destillate* in the tradition of the *Farewell Symphony*, this end of the Haydn homage for the bicentenary of his death could be interpreted as a metaphorical incorporation of a final farewell following the death of a human being.

Keeping this background in mind, it is revealing to have a look at the beginning of Schnebel’s piece as well. Like Feld’s “Introduzione,” it starts with the musicians entering the stage. The violin plays the first phrase of the theme, interrupted by rests. This might be interpreted in a way as an epilogue—a reminder of the music—as well as a beginning, like exploring the music that is not yet there. It is not the music itself, but the musicians entering the stage that makes clear that the violin playing is definitely a beginning. When the cello has also played an interrupted phrase, the two string players go to their places, and the violinist starts playing. Here Schnebel introduces a new performance element: the cellist does not play his part, but rather represents it in his gestures conducting the music. The audible music and its gestural and mental representation seem to be equally important.

6. *Lighting: Alfred Schnittke, First Symphony and “moz-art à la haydn”*

Performative elements can also be found in Alfred Schnittke’s First Symphony (1972) and in his *moz-art à la haydn: play on music* for two violins, two small string
orchestras, double bass and conductor (1977). With the First Symphony, Schnittke established his poly-stylistic writing. In this twelve-tone composition, he integrates quotations of Beethoven (Fifth Symphony), Tchaikovsky (Piano Concerto in B-flat minor), Johann Strauss Jr. (Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald) and others, as well as some more general stylistic models. At the end, Schnittke quotes the final fourteen measures of Haydn’s Farewell Symphony in which only the last two violins are left (the live execution is substituted by a tape recording). This finale section is to be played with candle light producing an effect of “authentic” lightning. The quotation seems especially important because, like Mechem, Schnittke wishes his symphony to be played after a performance of the Farewell Symphony. At the beginning, the players enter improvising, with the conductor arriving last. In the third movement, the woodwinds are placed behind the stage; they return for the Finale, playing some funeral marches, among them Frédéric Chopin’s Marche funèbre and “Aases Tod” from Edvard Grieg’s Peer Gynt. Being played before Schnittke’s piece and quoted at its end, the Farewell Symphony establishes a frame for this multi-referential work.

In moz-art à la haydn, Schnittke alludes to an older work of his own, moz-art (1976) for two violins, which refers to Mozart’s fragment KV 446 (416d). Two more works belong to the moz-art cycle: moz-art for oboe, harp, cembalo, violin, violoncello and double bass from 1980, and moz-art à la mozart for eight flutes and horn from 1990. According to Wolfgang Gratzer, Schnittke referred to the fragment even before in an untitled and unpublished piece. The Mozart fragment was part of the music for a pantomime, written for carnival 1783 and performed by Mozart, his family and some friends. On 12 March, he wrote to his father:
On Carnival Monday we performed our Masquerade at the Redoute.—It consisted of a Pantomime that we did during the half hour of intermission.—My sister-in-law played Colombine, I was Harlequin, my brother-in-law was Piero, Merk, an old dancing master, played Pantalon, and a Painter (by the name of Graßi) played the Dottore.—The idea for the Pantomime and the Musick for it both came from me.—Merk, the dancing master, was kind enough to coach us, and I can tell you, we played quite charmingly.40

As suggested in Schnebel’s work, and clearly evident in Schnittke’s First Symphony, moz-art à la haydn establishes an inter-textual relationship with two or more different works: moz-art, Mozart’s pantomime music and the Farewell Symphony. Schnittke explains the movement of the musicians—a new element in moz-art à la haydn compared with the original moz-art—in a double seating plan. [Figure 1]
At the beginning, the musicians are ordered in a triangle, with the double bass and the conductor in the middle. The two small orchestras are distinctly separated one from the other. At figure 18, the beginning of a Moderato section, the musicians...
gradually move to the middle, and the two small orchestras gradually merge together. Before figure 27 they return to their initial places—this passage was added for *moz-art à la haydn*. At the end, all the musicians except for the cellist, the double bass player, and the conductor, leave the stage. But they don’t just leave: in the final Andante section, added as well for *moz-art à la haydn*, the light slowly begins to dim, and after the sound of the departing musicians cannot been heard any more, the conductor continues conducting for a short time, even though nobody can see this in the darkness.

Taking a closer look at the beginning, recall that the musicians don’t enter, but are already at their respective places. But the public cannot see them, because they play in complete darkness. At figure 2, the light is suddenly switched on. This section was also added by Schnittke; the original *moz-art* piece began at figure 3. Instead of the inversion of the motion, as found in other referential works described above, here there is an inversion of the lighting dramaturgy. But the fact that the light is switched on suddenly and not gradually, and that it is done to a *fortissimo* chord played by the full orchestra (except the two solo violins), makes it more likely that this, as Dominique Sohet noticed,\(^{41}\) is an allusion to the beginning of *The Creation* as well.

Through the subtitle “play on music,” Schnittke emphasizes the theatrical elements of his composition: the lighting, the moving, and the imagined performance of the original pantomime. But a second meaning of the subtitle refers to the work’s playful treating of pre-existing music, as exemplified in this composition, and generally in Schnittke’s oeuvre.
7. Musical Theatre: Jörn Arnecke, “Unter Eis”

Whereas the compositions analyzed up to now are instrumental works integrating performance elements, Jörn Arnecke possibly incorporates a reflection of the Farewell Symphony into his work for musical theatre in 13 scenes Unter Eis (Under Ice). It is also possible, perhaps even more likely, that an allusion was made by means of the scenic realization of the work’s première at the Ruhr Triennale 2007. The action takes place in the banker and manager milieu and shows the intellectual and emotional poverty of such a world that is focused on effectiveness and money making. In the crucial scene, the protagonist Paul Niemand (Paul Nobody) imagines his suicide: “Bei der nächsten Geschäftsreise stürze ich mich aus dem Fenster aus zehntausend Meter Höhe DAS WIRD DANN JA WOHL IRGENDWEI IRGENDWEG MITBEKOMMEN” (During the next business trip, I will jump out of the window from ten thousand meters high, THAT SHOULD BE NOTICED SOMEHOW BY SOMEBODY). The orchestra is more and more diminished, most parts ending with a descending chromatic scale while violin I/1 and I/4 play a nearly endless b-flat.” This ppp tone recalls an electronic signal such as the tone of an ECG computer after a person dies, or, less positively, a tinnitus sound.

In the scenic realization by the librettist Falk Richter, at this moment the musicians left their place and went away—an action not required by the score but suggested by the drama, as the orchestra in this work is part of the dramatic action.42 When the audience enters the theatre, the players are sitting in the foyer like passengers in an airport terminal:

Der Abend beginnt für den Zuschauer bereits in der Vorhalle. Es ist die The evening starts for the audience still in the foyer. It is the

PAUL NIEMAND BITTE WE ARE CALLING
PAUSSENGER PAUL NIEMAND
PAUL NIEMAND BITTE ZU GATE SIEBZEHN

Isolated string players are sitting in the room, they are playing, interrupting themselves because their mobile phones are ringing, because they want to get some sleep, because they have to move, because they are too exhausted,
weil sie sich nicht konzentrieren können, setzen wieder an, brechen ab 

because they don’t enjoy playing any more, because they can’t concentrate, they restart, break off.

During the first part (scene 1-7), the twenty string players are situated on four “isles” in the auditorium (five players each), the hornists and percussionists play from outside the auditorium. After the break, the hornists take the places of four string players. At times they also speak, e.g. in scene 8: “Ich will hier raus” (I want to leave). The exit of the players at the end of this scene demonstrates the realization of this wish, as well as Paul Niemand’s announcement: “ich sitze im Flugzeug, neben mir all die Männer, die morgen alle ihre Entlassungsscheine auf dem Tisch haben werden, weil ich HEUTE NACHT NOCH die Namenslisten mit den Entlassungsvorschlägen nach DÜSSELDORF bringe” (I am sitting in the airplane, next to me all the men who will find their notices of dismissal on their desks tomorrow, because I will bring the rosters with the proposed dismissals TONIGHT to DÜSSELDORF). Manuel Brug, in a review of the première, interpreted the exit of the musicians as an allusion to Haydn’s Farewell Symphony:

Brück [the actor playing Paul Niemand] lamentiert sich anrührend und doch angemessen distanziert in Versagensängste und Rachefantasien, wird hin und her geworfen von den Stimmungsschwankungen seiner Kollegenkonkurrenten. Die steigern Brück [the actor playing Paul Nobody] laments in a touching, but appropriately distant way, fears of professional failure and fantasies of revenge; he is shuddered by the mood swings of his rival colleagues. Only their talking increases, but with
sich zwar nur verbal, aber mit ariosem Furor in ihrem Dummsprech aus Effizienzregeln und Core-Value-Phrasen, machen selbst ein Squashspiel noch zum Sprachduell und besingen dann laienhaft sentimental den Wert von Kultur. Während über das Orchester eine Entlassungswelle rollt. Es trollt sich wie weiland bei Haydns Abschiedssinfonie.44

Perhaps the reviewer had Sigismund Neukomm’s version of the anecdote in mind: “H[aydn] told me that the Prince, in the course of economic decisions, decided to dismiss the useless [unnütze] Kapelle: inde lacrymae which dried up as a result of H’s happy inspiration, and the Prince renounced his economic restrictions, whereupon H. in a small new symphony, had the musicians enter, one after another. In my version it was not Tomasini but the double-bass player who was the last to leave.”45 But even if Neukomm mentions economic reasons for the dismissal of the orchestra, the mental background is completely different from the world created by Richter and Arnecke: in the court society of the late eighteenth century, the music was part of the representation as well as of entertainment and a sort of intellectual exchange. These aspects do not have any importance for the cold financial world of Unter Eis. And while the exit in Haydn’s symphony is a communication addressed to the Prince, in Unter Eis it expresses the lack of future and complete despair. The communicative potential of the music is lost (only within the theatrical reality, of course).
Much in the vein of Arnecke and Richter, George Crumb refers to the Farewell Symphony in a serious metaphorical way. His composition Night of the Four Moons (1969) was not only written to honor the occasion of the landing on the moon, but Crumb wrote it from 16 to 24 July as Apollo 11 was on its flight. By mentioning this on top of the score, Crumb to a certain degree made the Apollo flight, one of the most important media events in history, part of the work itself. Typical of Crumb’s style, he chose alto, flute, banjo, electric cello, and percussion for setting texts by the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca which refer to the moon in different ways.

Unlike the other poems, the last poem, “¡Huye luna, luna, luna!” (“Run away, moon, moon, moon!”), establishes two roles, the child and the moon. Crumb wanted to distinguish these two parts as much as possible: “The voices of the child (el niño) and the moon (la luna) should be sharply differentiated in style of performance. Each ‘role’ should be highly stylized by means of vocal timbre, inflection, and gesture.” Initially, physical motion is evoked by the text in four different manners. The child’s warning “Run away moon, moon, moon!” is followed by the answer of the moon “Niño, déjame que baile” (“Child, let me dance”). The child reinforces his warning saying that he can hear the threatening gypsies coming nearer. At the end the child, presumably dead, is walking with the moon through the sky. The last two verses are sung from offstage, when all the moving musicians have reached their new position.

The music of this epilogue, split up into the off-stage “Musica Humana” and the “Musica Mundana” on stage, played by the remaining violoncellist, gradually fades out in a series of sound waves, starting always “dal niente” with a crescendo to ppp and going back “al niente.” The tempo, too, is reduced each time the cello is
playing. This suggests two influential pieces: musically and textually the last movement “Der Abschied” (Farewell) of Gustav Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde* (The Song of the Earth) with its text “Wie eine Silberbarke schwebt der Mond” (The moon goes like a silver boat), especially with the berceuse rhythm, is recalled; and, as the composer himself has pointed out, Haydn’s *Farewell Symphony* is evoked by both the physical movement of the musicians and the new key of the epilogue, F-sharp major, the final key of the *Farewell Symphony*. The epilogue ends with an incomplete repetition of the last verse, which breaks down before the last word: “con un niño de la...” (“holding a child by the...”).

Crumb expressed his ambivalence towards the landing on the moon by beginning the work with the poem “La luna está muerta, muerta” (“The moon is dead, dead”). Perhaps he wanted to make the criticism of the “conquering” of the moon a thread to the moon. Indeed, such a thread is brought to fruition by the last poem and its musical and theatrical setting which interprets the landing as a farewell—a farewell to a time when the moon was still untouched, perhaps also to the dream of a fascinatingly unattainable celestial body. Thus, Crumb’s reference to Haydn considers not only the music and the motion, but also the metaphor of “Farewell.”

Two years later, in *Vox Balaenae* for electric flute, electric cello, and electric piano, Crumb wrote a remarkably similar ending, but without motion by the players. Its last movement, a “Sea-Nocturne” subtitled “... for the end of time,” clearly expresses the notion of “Farewell.” At the end of this movement in F-sharp major, the music is “dying, dying” with the dynamic diminishing from *ppp* through *pppp* and *ppppp*, until the players “play in pantomime (absolutely silent!).”
9. The Farewell as a Beginning: Arnold Schoenberg, Second String Quartet

Metaphoric reference to Haydn’s symphony can also have more positive implications, such as one might possible find in Arnold Schoenberg’s Second String Quartet op. 10 (1907/08). With this piece, Schoenberg sees himself following in a tradition of stretching beyond the accepted performance norms of a given artistic genre, as exemplified by Haydn’s Farewell Symphony. Schoenberg recognized this quality in Haydn, to whom he ascribed a “newness which never perishes,” perhaps most clearly revealed through the way the performative elements in the finale of the Farewell Symphony surpassed the symphonic norms of Haydn’s time. Citing the old street-ballad “O du lieber Augustin, alles ist hin,” Schoenberg linked the second movement (Scherzo) to the Viennese music tradition as well as to a contemporaneous cultural event: on 4 September 1908, Vienna’s mayor Karl Lueger inaugurated the “Augustin-Brunnen” (Augustin Fountain) in the Neustiftgasse. In the third and fourth movements, Schoenberg included poems by Stefan George sung by a soprano—boldly and for the first time integrating a voice into a string quartet. This certainly can be understood as a clear reference to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. By using soprano instead of a group of soloists and mixed choir, Schoenberg transformed Beethoven’s idea to suit the aesthetic qualities of chamber music. But whereas the third movement expresses a compositional as well as a personal crisis, the fourth movement turns the piece into a utopian vision. Its text describes the departure to a new and better world on another planet. For the first time, Schoenberg refrains from indicating the key at the beginning of the movement. Probably not by chance, the first movement is in F-sharp minor, and at the very end Schoenberg returns to the F-sharp tonality, this time to F-sharp major, as the music completely and smoothly faded away.
Interpreting this ending as a reflection upon the *Farewell Symphony* is supported by the fact that Schoenberg, the composer who established the Second Viennese School as a direct heir of the Viennese classical style, had a profound historical consciousness, and was “among the first theorists to reverse the nineteenth-century tendency to see Haydn as a subordinate and merely conventional or convention-defining composer.” The *Farewell Symphony* was among the many Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven scores contained in Schoenberg’s library. Schoenberg’s historical self-awareness might have been more of a driving force in this pivotal work than in any of his other compositions. Bryan Proksch has affirmed this close connection to Haydn in this work by pointing out that, “Schoenberg adapted salient traits from Haydn’s musical style in his own compositions, including the Second String Quartet.” Proksch goes on to emphasize the compositional analogies of the phrase structure and the motive development between Schoenberg’s string quartet and Haydn’s op. 54/1 and op. 76/2 as well as the formal parallel with the scherzo as second movement to Haydn’s op. 33. Martin Eybl, too, finds similarities in the first movement of Schoenberg’s quartet in the way the second Hauptthema with the Seitenthema reflects Haydn’s monothematic sonata form. Finally, in a late reaction to the première of his quartet, the composer himself, in a talk given in 1937, linked his work to Haydn:

The excitement of the audiences at first performances of new compositions of mine was growing greater from work to work. Every now and then, when I believed it could not be surpassed, I discovered that it could. But, in my memory, one of the worst occasions was in connection with my Second String Quartet. The public listened to the first movement without any reaction, either pro or con. But as soon as the second movement, the Scherzo, began, a part of
the audience started to laugh at some figures which seemed curious to them and they continued with bursts of laughter at many places during this movement.

[...]

From now on the public reaction became worse and worse. I am sure that if, at this point, the Rosé Quartet had played a string quartet of Haydn, the public would not have noticed the difference and would have continued their nonsensical laughter.62

Schoenberg’s experience during the première of the Second String Quartet reminds us once more that the act of performing music, as explored in the *Farewell Symphony*, is always an act of communication with the public which can fail miserably. Moreover, if we consider the rich network of references in Schoenberg’s string quartet—the correspondence to Beethoven, the quotation of the Viennese song and the use of the George poems— the tonal construction and the process of fading out establish an inter-textual relationship to Haydn’s symphony, the “Farewell” would in this case be at the same time a beginning.

**10. Conclusion**

More than any other of Haydn’s instrumental works, the *Farewell Symphony* offers a number of aspects—musical structure, physical motion, lighting effects, and metaphorical content—that have attracted and inspired reference by later composers, particularly those of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. The theatrical elements so extraordinary for Haydn’s time have become part of the common musico-theatrical language, and have enriched the referential possibilities.
Thus, composers not only allude to Haydn’s music, they also refer to the theatricality of the well-known anecdote linked to the symphony, and to the metaphor of “Farewell.” Consequently, a three-fold meta-connection evolves: the reflection of technical particulars of the *Farewell Symphony* performance anecdote, the anecdote’s prolific implementation into the new works, and last but not least the idea of farewell on a quasi philosophical level.

As this essay is a first attempt to specify the compositional response to a single Haydn work, it would be premature to evaluate the results in a broader context. But by revealing the enormous creative potential of Haydn’s oeuvre through my analysis of works based on the *Farewell Symphony*, I hope to encourage further studies on the reception of other Haydn works in order to generate a deeper understanding of Haydn’s reception in general.

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3 The piece has been published in *Ein Haydnspaß! Il maestro e gli scolari; Klaviermusik um und über Joseph Haydn für 2 und 4 Hände*, ed. Franzpeter Goebels (Mainz: Schott, 1982), 102-17.


Reger composed also Siegesfeier (1915/16) for organ with a quotation of the “German Song” and a Fughette über das Deutschlandlied for piano (1916) designated to the Vaterländische Gedenkbuch: Das Land Goethes 1914 bis 1916. See Schneider, Lexikon “Musik über Musik”, 153.


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Carpani, *Le Haydine*, 123.

The first movement of the *Farewell Symphony* musically anticipates the idea of moving with an “overall pattern of motion and rest” (Judith L. Schwartz, “Periodicity and Passion in the First Movement of Haydn’s ‘Farewell’ Symphony”, in *Studies in Musical Sources and Style: Essays in Honor of Jan LaRue*, ed. Eugene K. Wolf and Edward H. Roesner [Madison: A-R Editions, 1990], 293-338, cit. 294). Furthermore, Haydn includes in this movement a minuet section before the recapitulation—certainly not by chance a dance episode. For Webster, “The D-Major Interlude in the First Movement of Haydn’s ‘Farewell’ Symphony”, ibid., 339-80, cit. 379 this episode “is a mirage”, that “prefigures the ultimate arrival home”.

Schwartz, “Periodicity and Passion”, 333 emphasizes the dramatic context of the *Farewell Symphony*, stressing the “striking similarity” between the first movement of the symphony and the overture to *Armida*.


anarchisch-ironische ‘Energie’ des jungen Haydn ist seine Vorwegnahme einer Charles Ives’schen Idee. Er organisierte ein ‘gassatim-Konzert’ im öffentlichen Raum, bei dem er Musiker einlud, sich am Tiefen Graben in Wien auf mehrere Häuser und Winkel zu verteilen und das zu spielen, was sie wollten. Und das um 1753! Das finde ich wunderbar.” (“An [...] example for the anarchic-ironical ‘energy’ of the young Haydn is the anticipation of an idea by Charles Ives. He organized a concert in public space, inviting musicians to spread round the houses and corners of the Tiefe Graben in Vienna and to play what they liked to. Around 1753! In my opinion, this is wonderful.”)


24 Corcoran, Farewell Symphonies ([Dublin]: Contemporary Music Centre, 1982), 8.

25 The same can be found in Corcoran’s Trio for piano, violin and violoncello (1978) and in his Second Quintet for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn (1979). See Kreutziger-Herr, “Frank Corcoran”, A.


27 Cf. the composer’s preface, in Feld, Capricci per quartetto di legni e chitarra (Praha, Mainz: Panton International, 1971): “Prvá věta, ’Introdukce na příchodnou’, jest protipólem známého nápadu z Haydnovy symfonie ‘Na odchodnou’, kde hráči v závěru poslední věty jeden po druhém odcházejí s podia.” (“The first movement, a ‘Wellcome Introduction’ [sic], is an antithesis of the well-known idea of Haydn’s ‘Farewell Symphony’, where the players at the close of the last movement depart one by one from the platform.”)

28 Preface, in Feld, Capricci.
Kirke Mechem, *Haydn’s Return: Fugue and Variations on the “Farewell” Symphony; Study Score* (Bryn Mawr: Theodore Presser Co., 1974), Preface. I am sincerely grateful to the composer for having sent to me the score.


Cf. Manuel Brug’s review below.


Cf. the chapter “Das größte Fernsehereignis aller Zeiten: Die Landung auf dem Mond als mediales Live-Event”, in Daniel Grinsted, *Die Reise zum Mond: Zur Faszinationsgeschichte eines medienkulturellen Phänomens zwischen Realität und Fiktion* (Berlin: Logos, 2009), 159-63. Grinsted (ibid., 19) emphasizes that the television was the only way for people to participate at this event.


The English translation of the poems is given in Crumb, Night of the Four Moons, 3.

I am grateful to Stephen Fisher for having drawn my attention on this work.


Heinrich Helge Hattesen, Emanzipation durch Aneignung: Untersuchungen zu den frühen Streichquartetten Arnold Schönbergs (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1990), 418 mentions the genre of the choral symphony in general.

Hartmut Krones, Arnold Schönberg: Werk und Leben (Wien: Edition Steinbauer, 2005), 165-66 equates F-sharp and G-flat major and interprets this end in the tradition of key characteristics as “Triumph in der Schwierigkeit, freyes Aufathmen auf überstiegenen Hügeln; Nachklang einer Seele, die stark gerungen und endlich gesiegt hat” (“triumph over difficulty, free sigh of relief uttered when hurdles are surmounted; echo of a soul which has fiercely struggled and finally conquered”). The quotation is from Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst (Stuttgart: I. Scheible’s Buchhandlung, 1839), 382; English translation


57 Proksch, “Precedents of Schoenberg’s Compositional Practice”, 159.


59 For Hattesen, *Emanzipation durch Aneignung*, 323 it is “Traditionsbewältigung” (coming to terms with tradition).
Proksch, “Precedents of Schoenberg’s Compositional Practice”, 149.
