

# HAYDN

The Online Journal of the Haydn Society of North America

---

Volume 2  
Number 2 *Fall 2012*

Article 2

---

November 2012

## A Finale for Haydn's Last String Quartet

William Drabkin

Follow this and additional works at: <https://remix.berklee.edu/haydn-journal>

---

### Recommended Citation

Drabkin, William (2012) "A Finale for Haydn's Last String Quartet," *HAYDN*: Vol. 2 : No. 2 , Article 2.  
Available at: <https://remix.berklee.edu/haydn-journal/vol2/iss2/2>

This Score is brought to you for free and open access by Research Media and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in HAYDN by an authorized editor of Research Media and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact [jmforce@berklee.edu](mailto:jmforce@berklee.edu).

## A Finale for Haydn's Last String Quartet

by William Drabkin

### *Abstract*

Haydn's string quartet known as Op. 103 is an incomplete work: comprising an andante grazioso in B-flat major followed by a minuet in D minor, it is lacking its outer movements. In this paper I give a brief account of its composition history, followed by a summary of my efforts to compose an opening sonata-allegro for it, a movement discussed and first performed at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in November 2009. The focus of the present study, however, is a finale for Op. 103. After considering Haydn's options to turn the two completed movements into a tonally unified quartet, I give an account of my own composition of a finale, a fugue based on a subject used in one of Rodolphe Kreutzer's *Etudes* of 1796 followed by an accelerated final section in which the tune of an earlier work by Haydn (one which has remained associated with Op. 103 since the ageing and frail composer agreed to have his two completed movements published) makes an unexpected guest appearance.

### *The "Op. 103 problem"*

Haydn's last string quartet, Op. 103, is not merely an incomplete work. It lacks those elements that most strongly define a Classical instrumental composition: the outer movements. After the five-movement string quartets dating from between 1757 and 1762, Haydn always wrote quartets in four movements, albeit of varying length, with inner movements comprising a slow movement and a minuet (or scherzo) in either order. This pattern remains consistent right up to the two quartets of Op. 77, which were begun and completed in 1799 and to which Op. 103 was to be part of a set of six works. As time wore on, Op. 103 was re-conceived as the final work of a set of three and, after the

---

publication of Op. 77 in September 1802, as a separate piece. The biographical evidence we have from the early 1800s informs us that Haydn simply lacked the time, and later the strength, to write the outer movements.

For a time, Op. 103 was described as a quartet in B-flat major, on account of the tonality of its opening *andante grazioso* and the lack of information about other material associated with it. Two leaves of sketches by Haydn, whose authenticity was attested by Aloys Fuchs, came to the general attention of scholars in the twentieth century, but neither gave any indication that Haydn had done any work on the outer movements. The surfacing of a third leaf towards the end of the century, and a fourth a few years later, provide evidence that Haydn had in fact made a small amount of progress on a first movement, in D minor, though little if any headway on a finale. Three of these four leaves were published in transcription by Horst Walter in *Joseph Haydn Werke*, series XII, vol. 6 (2003). The one most recently discovered by David Wyn Jones, while working at the John Ryland Library in Manchester, was published in facsimile and transcription a soon afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

Upon publication of Walter's edition of Haydn's last nine quartets, in *Joseph Haydn Werke*, I conceived the idea of writing outer movements for Op. 103 in a late eighteenth-century style, partly based on the sketches published in that volume. In a paper read at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in the Haydn bicentennial year of 2009, I described my approach to the slender amount of material for the first movement—a score sketch for the opening four bars, and more rudimentary material in score for a further four bars for a later passage in the exposition—together with some of the principles by which I fashioned a complete movement in sonata form,

---

<sup>1</sup> "A Newly Identified Sketchleaf for Haydn's Quartet in D minor, 'Opus 103'", *Haydn-Studien*, 8 (2004), 413-17.

---

comprising 124 bars. Although the movement included eight bars of "authentic" music, not counting the recapitulation of this music later in the movement, it could by no stretch of the imagination be described as an attempt to reconstruct a lost first movement of Haydn's Op. 103; there is no evidence that the score of such a movement ever existed, and the difficulties that Haydn faced as a composer from 1803 until his death six years later make it unlikely that he had a complete sonata-form movement in his head, which merely required writing down. At best, my piece could be described as a composition of my own, incorporating those few bars that Haydn bequeathed to posterity, which I endeavored to write in a historically informed manner, i.e. approaching Haydn's sound-world and following his compositional principles as faithfully as possible.

I explained in my AMS paper that Haydn sometimes reworked early ideas or harmonic techniques into later works, and that I had taken advantage of this in my Op. 103/I. At the same time, I was conscious of his famous remark about the Op. 33 set as having been written "in a new and quite special way," and of the general acknowledgement of Haydn's virtually limitless imagination as a composer. In other words, there is something "new and quite special" not only about Op. 33 but also about every set of Haydn quartets. I presented an account of how my first movement used some ideas present in earlier works, but was mainly concerned with the challenge of composing a sonata-form movement that employed procedures that Haydn had not actually used before but might nonetheless have found appropriate to some future work. This gave rise to a creative dilemma: on the one hand, any compositional procedures that Haydn had himself not previously used could not be described as Haydn's; on the other hand, a movement devoid of such procedures would have lacked the originality that we commonly regard as essential to each of his quartets. My opening movement for Op. 103 was given its first performance at the Haydn session of A. M. S. meeting, on the morning of November 14,

2009.<sup>2</sup>

### *Composing a finale for Op. 103: Haydn's options*

Haydn began work on Op. 103 in 1802, and composed the middle movements within a year. There are several possible ways in which he may have contemplated completing the work. On 25 January 1804 August Griesinger wrote to the publishers Breitkopf & Härtel to inform them that an allegro movement was also finished, along with the andante and minuet, and that only another allegro was required to complete the quartet.<sup>3</sup> Presumably, Griesinger was reporting that the first movement had been composed, and that the quartet was still lacking a finale. Were this indeed the case, the completion of a four-movement work would have been a realistic proposition.

A less attractive alternative would be for Haydn to have contented himself with a three-movement quartet by abandoning an additional, final allegro altogether. This would result in a tonally coherent work in D minor, but leave it, uncharacteristically, in three movements, with a traditional internal movement—a minuet—serving as finale. This three-movement plan features in Haydn's piano sonatas, but not in his string quartets.

Neither of these options proved remotely possible for the increasingly frail composer. As Griesinger

<sup>2</sup> I express my gratitude to those A. M. S. delegates who assisted me so ably: Mary Hunter, first violin; Thomas Irvine, viola; Helen Greenwald, cello. (I took the second violin part.)

<sup>3</sup> The letters from Griesinger to Breitkopf & Härtel have been collected in a book by Otto Biba, *"Eben komme ich von Haydn...": Georg August Griesingers Korrespondenz mit Joseph Haydns Verleger Breitkopf & Härtel 1799-1819* (Zurich: Atlantis Musikbuch, 1987). They are quoted extensively in Horst Walter's Preface to *Joseph Haydn Werke* xii/6, and also in his article "Haydn's späte Streichquartette: Überlieferung und Textkritik," published in the proceedings of a conference on the Haydn quartets held in Eisenstadt during the week of May 1–5, 2002, *Haydn & Das Streichquartett*, ed. Georg Feder and Walter Reicher (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2003), 139–67. The letters charting Haydn's progress (in reality, lack of progress) are excerpted in Walter, "Haydn's späte Streichquartette: Überlieferung und Textkritik," 145–46.

reported to the publishers seven months later, on 22 August 1804, Haydn had in fact composed only the two middle movements. A third option, which Haydn probably considered more feasible, was to abandon the idea of outer movements in D minor and instead round off the quartet with an intellectually less taxing rondo in B-flat major. This would have, of course, resulted in the form and tonality of Op. 103 being turned upside down: what was initially conceived as a four-movement quartet in D minor would be transformed into a three-movement work in B-flat major. In his edition of the late quartets for the *Joseph Haydn Werke*, Walter published a sketch in B-flat, almost certainly intended for a rondo and violinistic in character, which he described as an "emergency solution" (*Notlösung*) to the problem of finishing Op. 103. Example 1 reproduces Walter's transcription (*Joseph Haydn Werke*, XII/6, p. 168, staff 11), with two editorial interventions of mine: pairs of sixteenth notes have been slurred, and a simple fingering has been provided to show that the tune, when played at pitch, is thoroughly idiomatic on the violin.

Example 1: Haydn, Sketch for the theme of a Rondon in B-flat major

There is one further sketch, in score format, which Walter considered a possible start of a last movement. The sketch gives a bar of solo cello; the other three staves are blank (*Joseph Haydn*

*Werke*, XII/6, p. 169, staves 4–7). The cello line, I believe, may have been the subject, or the start of a subject, for a fugal finale.

### *Composing a finale for Op. 103: my options*

Assuming that the andante grazioso and minuet are intended as the inner movements of a four-movement quartet, and having already written a first movement, what remained for me to do was to compose a finale stylistically compatible with the first three movements. In undertaking this task, I made a number of observations and judgments.

Compared to the quartets of Op. 76 and Op. 77, Haydn's inner movements are conservative in design and content. This can be seen especially in the relatively straightforward A–B–A form of the andante, and in the modest scope and thematic development of the minuet, especially its trio section.<sup>4</sup> The sketches from Walter's edition, on which I based my first movement, also point more in the direction of earlier rather than later Haydn, and my completion of Op. 103/I is, accordingly, closer to the quartets the 1770s and early 1780s than to those of the decade 1787–97.

To keep at least some of Haydn's original material in each outer movement, it would have been possible to transpose the rondo theme (Example 1) up to D major. In doing so, however, the resulting line would have been far less idiomatic for the violin and it would have occupied an unusually high tessitura. The theme seems to have been conceived expressly in B-flat major, and I rejected it as a

<sup>4</sup> This viewpoint is, admittedly, not universally shared. In *The String Quartets of Joseph Haydn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), Floyd and Margaret Grave argue that "[i]n setting out to write this work in D minor ... Haydn was obviously not content to inscribe his impending loss of mental and physical powers on a composition of modest proportions and technical means. Rather he seemed intent on defying the ravages of age and illness by equaling and even exceeding his previous accomplishments," 333.

possible theme for Op. 103/IV.

The idea of a fugue rather than a rondo, as suggested by the score sketch with solo cello line, is attractive, not merely because Haydn cultivated the fugal finale in his earlier quartets (Op. 20 nos. 2, 5 and 6, in 1772; Op. 50 no. 4, in 1787), to which one should add the late Quartet in E flat, Op. 76 no. 6 of 1797, in which a fugal allegro acts as a miniature finale to the first movement's theme and variations. Composing a fugue can also be thought of as a neutral act in writing for string quartet: the thematic material does not determine the "meaning" of the movement, as might be the case with a theme for a rondo or sonata-rondo. In other words, by writing a fugal finale I would not be imposing a new persona, so to speak, on a work that was partly composed by Haydn, and partly based on his thematic material.

The first task, then, was to find, or create, a suitable subject for a fugue that was idiomatic to string instruments. From my early days as a violin student, I recalled a contemporary solo violin piece, in fugal style, which was in D minor and could be worked into a string quartet texture. This is the last of Rodolphe Kreutzer's *40 Etudes or Caprices*, a set of didactic pieces composed in 1796 and published in 1807, and thus contemporary with the Haydn's last complete sets of quartets. The start of the Etude, in D minor in 6/8 meter, is reproduced as Example 2; it will be familiar to any classically trained violinist.



Example 2: Rodolphe Kreutzer, Etude No. 40, bars 1–9

Rather than retain double-stops in one violin part, I shared the start of this *fuga a 2 soggetti* between the viola and second violin, gradually expanding to four-part fugal texture. (On account of my later treatment of this theme, the meter has been halved, from 6/8 to 3/8.)

Having decided upon a subject, I then wanted to design the movement in such a way that it would move from a learned style to a more *galant* one. Of the four examples of Haydn's fugal finales for quartet, the last—Op. 50 no. 4—abandons the learned style most quickly. Within the Op. 20 set, it has been suggested that those quartets that were probably composed earlier are more fugal throughout. In Haydn's *Entstehungskatalog*, the order of the quartets is given as follows: 5, 6, 2, 3, 4, 1. Note that the three quartets with fugal finales precede those in sonata form. If the order in EK reflects the order of composition more precisely, then one could say that the finale of no. 2, which is by far the most texturally varied of the three and whose final pages are not dependent upon the learned contrapuntal relationships established at the beginning, marks a progression away from fugue as a demonstration of traditional compositional skill towards a position in which the fugal finale is an integral part of the work as a whole. Nearer to the topic of this paper, one can also see the same move from *gelehrt* to *galant* in the 83-bar allegro "finale" of the first movement of Op. 76 no. 6: fugal exposition (bars 145–167), development in strict contrapuntal style (bars 168–187), dominant pedal and concluding section

---

mainly characterized by a soloistic first violin part (bars 188–227). After a fugal exposition, my *allegro ma non troppo* movement for the Op. 103 finale proceeds in a series of passages, each marked by a cadential point in which a new treatment of the subject begins as the previous one ends. In each of these passages, the dependency on learned style is progressively weakened, and the fugue ends homophonically.

Finally, I had to consider what to do with the music that Haydn appended to the first edition of his *andante grazioso* and minuet, which he reluctantly gave to Breitkopf & Härtel for publication as a two-movement work. The music in question is the incipit of a partsong in A major, *Der Greis* ("The Old Man"), which Haydn had composed in the mid-1790s to a poem by Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim. The soprano part and its text, "Hin ist alle meine Kraft: alt und schwach bin ich" ("Gone is all my strength: I am old and weak"), were printed on the visiting-card that Haydn used in his last years. Although this music was never conceived in connection with a string quartet, and appeared in Breitkopf & Härtel's edition of Op. 103 only as an explanation for the work's incompleteness, it is difficult to ignore it when so little material survives for a finale for the quartet.

To make use of this music, I conceived my finale as a work in two tempi and two keys: to the D minor fugue I appended a section in D major, based on the partsong incipit, to be played at a very fast tempo. The character of the partsong is thus inverted: its tune breathes new life into the finale. As the fugue begins to expire after 140 bars, the first violin gradually brings the principal subject down from a high register, while the inner parts contribute to anguished dissonant chords over a tonic pedal in the cello. The subject is then transferred to the second violin (in bar 148), the first violin and viola now echoing the dissonant chords. A short cadenza (or *Eingang*) for the first violin now leads to a vivace *alla breve* based on "Hin ist alle meine Kraft," which thus upends the "old and weak"

sentiments of Gleim's text. Although the vivace, too, incorporates elements of fugal texture, it is essentially in homophonic texture, briefly giving way to bare octaves (bars 234–239) before pushing to its final cadence.

In moving from a 3/8 allegro ma non troppo in D minor to a vivace *alla breve* in D major, the trajectory of my finale follows that of a near-contemporary string quartet finale: that of Beethoven's Op. 95 (the "Quartetto serioso") of 1810. In this way the concept of historically informed composition, which has been my guiding principle throughout, ultimately oversteps the boundaries of the style of the composer I have hitherto sought to emulate. Let us remember, however, that Haydn's ultimate decision to give up the completion of Op. 103 coincides with the emergence of yet another "new and quite special" way of writing quartets: Beethoven composed his Op. 59 set in the year in which Breitkopf & Härtel published Op. 103. Seen from this perspective, my conservatively conceived fugue, together with its unexpected peroration, may be thought of as a way of linking the oeuvre of the two greatest exponents of the string quartet in the decades straddling the turn of the century.

#### *Works Cited*

- Biba, Otto. "Eben komme ich von Haydn...": *Georg August Griesingers Korrespondenz mit Joseph Haydns Verleger Breitkopf & Härtel 1799-1819*. Zurich: Atlantis Musikbuch, 1987.
- Grave, Floyd and Grave, Margaret. *The String Quartets of Joseph Haydn*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Jones, David Wyn. "A Newly Identified Sketchleaf for Haydn's Quartet in D minor, 'Opus 103'". *Haydn-Studien* 8 (2004): 413-17.
- Walter, Horst. "Haydn's späte Streichquartette: Überlieferung und Textkritik." In *Haydn & Das Streichquartett*, ed. Georg Feder and Walter Reicher, 139-67. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Vorwort." *Joseph Haydn: Streichquartette "Opus 76", "Opus 77" und "Opus 103"* [= *Joseph Haydn Werke*, series XII, vol. 6], ed. Horst Walter and Lars Schmidt-Thieme, vii-xvi. Munich: Henle, 2003.

# Finale for Haydn's Quartet in D minor, Op. 103

William Drabkin, on themes of  
Rodolphe Kreutzer and Joseph Haydn

FUGA: Allegro ma non troppo

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

*sotto voce*

*sotto voce*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*sotto voce*

*sr*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*sr*

*sotto voce*

29

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

36

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

43

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

50

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

57

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

64

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

71

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

78

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

85

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*crescendo*

92

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*f*

*f*

*f*

*tenuto*

99

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*tenuto*

106

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

113

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

120

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*decrescendo*

127

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*p*

*mancando*

134

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*più piano*

*pp*



141

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*fp*

*fp*

*fp*

148

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*fp*

*fp*

*fp*

155

Meno mosso, un poco allargando

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

161

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*poco f*

*tenuto, colla parte*

*poco f*

*tenuto, colla parte*

*poco f*

*tenuto, colla parte*

*poco f*

*p*

*p*

*p*

164 Vivace

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*sempre p*

169

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

175

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

180

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*f*

185

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

190

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

196

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

202

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

207

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

212

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

217

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

221

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

226

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

230

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*f p*

234

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*f*

239

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*crescendo ff*