

November 2016

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Recommended Citation

Lowe, Melanie (2016) "Teaching Topics with Haydn (alongside that Other Guy)," *HAYDN*: Vol. 6 : No. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://remix.berklee.edu/haydn-journal/vol6/iss2/4>

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Teaching Topics with Haydn (alongside that Other Guy)

by Melanie Lowe

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Abstract

A generation after Leonard Ratner introduced the concept of topics to eighteenth-century music scholarship, J. Peter Burkholder's 2006 revision of Grout/Palisca's *A History of Western Music* made teaching topicality more widely accessible in undergraduate music history. Welcome as this excursion into the topical universe may be, Burkholder's exploration of topics is limited to the music of Mozart. Indeed, undergraduates working primarily with this text (as do many) could easily get the impression that topical play is Mozart's game, and Mozart's alone. In this essay I make a case for teaching Haydn's topical art alongside that of Mozart. Topics discussed include the *alla turca* style, the Hungarian-Gypsy style, fantasia, *ombra* and *tempesta*.

I. Introduction

In 1980 Leonard Ratner introduced the concept of topics to eighteenth-century music scholarship with his seminal book *Classic Music*, but a generation of undergraduate students would pass through music degree programs before topical analysis would be widely taught in music history and theory classrooms. This welcome turn toward teaching topics to undergraduates was sparked by J. Peter Burkholder's momentous 2006 revision of Grout/Palisca's *A History of Western Music*, in which he presents a brief synopsis of Wye J. Allanbrook's topical analysis of the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in F Major, K. 332. Topics also make an appearance in all but name (he calls them "styles") in Burkholder's discussion of the musical delineation of social class in Mozart's *dramma giocoso* *Don Giovanni*. Welcome as this excursion into the topical

universe may be, there is no exploration of topics in the music of any other eighteenth-century composer in the most widely used English-language music history textbook. Burkholder's concluding sentence on the matter does acknowledge topicality as a wider-ranging musical-expressive strategy: "Becoming aware of the many styles [i.e. topics] Mozart and other Classic composers invoke helps us understand their music and discover an intriguing and meaningful network of references we would otherwise miss."¹ But undergraduates working primarily with this text (as do many) could easily get the impression that topical play is Mozart's game, and Mozart's alone.

To be fair to Burkholder, there are several reasons for such limited exposure to eighteenth-century topicality in undergraduate music history. First, and likely the main influence on Burkholder's text, the most groundbreaking scholarly work in topical analysis to follow Ratner focused almost exclusively on Mozart's music. Allanbrook's 1983 book *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni* is a testament to the interpretive potential of topical analysis in opera studies, while her richly detailed analyses of Mozart's K. 332 and K. 333 in "Two Threads Through the Labyrinth" (1992) have profoundly altered our hearings of these two beloved piano sonatas. Elaine Sisman's *Cambridge Music Handbook* on Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony (1993) not only offers an insightful reading of Mozart's topical discourse in this piece but also addresses the challenges that face the potential topical analyst, the most significant of which concerns the likely first step—the identification of a topic. And finally, V. Kofi Agawu's *Playing With Signs* (1991) is particularly important to note here. While his "semiotic interpretations" of Mozart's String Quintet in C Major, K. 515 and Beethoven's String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132 engage significantly with the "topical signs" in the expressive surface of each work, Agawu's reading of Haydn's String Quartet in D Minor, Op. 76 no. 2, hardly touches the topical realm, focusing instead on the rhetorical paradigm of beginning, middle, and ending functions. Perhaps Agawu chose this particular quartet because it lends itself more to "introversive" than to "extroversive" semiosis. Indeed, he writes of the quartet's first twelve measures: "If we

¹J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2010), 556.

ask how this opening period means, the answer is that meaning is inherent in the play of conventional and formal signs. The world of topical signs is no longer a strong presence here..."² But whatever his motivation, Agawu's choice of a particular Haydn example with lower topical parametric density runs the risk of implying (in a foundational theoretical tract, no less) that Haydn's music is not the topical analyst's playground.

The often prescribed linearity and perhaps unavoidable compartmentalization of content in music history courses may also contribute to the relative inattention we pay to Haydn's topical play. Indeed, a chronological course design practically removes Haydn from the game. If we hear topical mixture in instrumental music as originating in opera buffa but present Haydn before Mozart (as in Burkholder, Wright/Simms, and Taruskin/Gibbs), or instrumental music before vocal music (as in Bonds), the concept of topics is unlikely to be introduced until Haydn is in the rear-view mirror. And then, given ever increasing demands for pedagogical efficiency, Mozart's music offers one-stop shopping. If the "quicksilver contrasts both between and within clearly defined and palpably cadence-oriented phrases"³ in K. 332 echo the rapid-fire expressive changeability of Mozart's comedies, teaching this piano sonata alongside *Le nozze di Figaro* streamlines the syllabus. Such pedagogical pairing is practically unimaginable for Haydn, whose comic operas are hardly celebrated, rarely taught, and almost never performed or recorded. To justify their place on any but a composer- or period-centered syllabus would likely be a tall order for most instructors of undergraduate music history.

W. Dean Sutcliffe neatly summarizes the overall Mozart-slanted historiographical situation: "One might argue that topic theory, as a means of accounting for developments in the art music of the later eighteenth century, has been made in the image of Mozart. . . . Such essentializing may be especially apparent when one considers the 'hard end' of the theory, whereby the speed of topical interplay becomes a defining

²V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 103.

³Mary Hunter, "Topics and Opera Buffa," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 62.

feature. Thus the quickfire juggling of seemingly disparate material is held up as a stylistic norm, and Mozart is then proclaimed, in the words of Ratner, to be ‘the greatest master at mixing and coordinating topics, often in the shortest space.’”⁴ And so we circle back to Ratner, who would seem to have made the case for Mozart as prime exemplar of topical discourse while defining the concept itself in Classic music. My purpose in this essay is not to point out the logical flaw in Ratner’s argument, to antagonize Burkholder et al., or to dethrone Mozart as the *locus classicus* of late eighteenth-century topicality. Rather, I hope merely to advocate for the pedagogical payoff of teaching Haydn’s topical art alongside that of his more topically celebrated colleague.

II. Two “exotic” topics: the *alla turca* and Hungarian-Gypsy styles

Perhaps the most easily identifiable topic, especially for listeners new to the concept, is the *alla turca* style. Although frequently encountered in late eighteenth-century music, for my undergraduates, at least, the topic is practically synonymous with one piece—the irrepressible Rondo *alla turca* finale of Mozart’s Piano Sonata in A Major, K. 331.⁵ (In my experience, students can name the style in this piano piece more readily than in any other music, even when they are presented with costumed, singing Turks in “Singt dem großen Bassa Lieder” in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.) But once the topic’s parameters are delineated for students—or, in a more active learning process, generated by the students themselves from select Mozart examples (the finale of K. 331, the Overture and Janissary choruses from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and the finale of Violin Concerto No. 5, K. 219 work well for this exercise)—music in the *alla turca* style is easily recognized. Among its defining traits are duple meter, repetitive and percussive accompaniment, root position harmonies, melodies in parallel thirds, jangling ornamentation before downbeats, running stepwise melodies, modal inflections, and awkward or inane phraseology. What, then, to make of Haydn’s “Rondo, in the Gipsie’s style” (the finale of the Piano Trio in G Major, Hob. XV:25), or Haydn’s “Rondo

⁴ W. Dean Sutcliffe, “Topics in Chamber Music, in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 119-121.

⁵ This piece is widely recognized by millennials as the music that accompanies the sliding toy seals sequence in the *Baby Einstein* video *Baby Mozart*.

All'Ungarese" (the finale of the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in D Major, Hob. XVIII:11), both of which share many if not most of the features of the *alla turca* style just specified?⁶

By teaching Haydn's Hungarian-Gypsy style alongside Mozart's *alla turca* style, we offer our students a more nuanced picture of these two "exotic" topics along with a richer exploration of late eighteenth-century exoticism. The high degree of stylistic overlap should give students immediate pause: if the first step in the topical reading of a piece is to identify its salient topics, how might one distinguish between these two representations? In this case, not only can we not meaningfully differentiate the *alla turca* and Hungarian-Gypsy styles, but in trying to do so, we miss the larger interpretive point. Because both topics were constructions of Western European (for this music, that means predominantly Habsburg and Viennese) culture, the topical reference here is not to any realistic representation of either Turkish or Gypsy music but rather to the Western European perception of a barbaric, primitive, and underdeveloped Eastern European Other.⁷ To be sure, we can make this point with just Mozart's music in the *alla turca* style, but adding Haydn's music in the Hungarian-Gypsy style to the playlist makes for a more compelling musical and pedagogical experience.

For instructors who have more time or interest in interrogating these two "exotic" topics, there are further interpretive subtleties to be explored when they are considered together. For example, Catherine Mayes argues that the two styles, despite their substantial stylistic overlap and shared cultural referent, carried different associations and meanings: "Hungarian-Gypsy music was primarily associated with dancing, while

⁶ To offer one more example, Beethoven's *Alla ingharese, quasi un Capriccio*, Op. 129 also exhibits many of these stylistic features.

⁷ Many scholars make this point, of course, but Catherine Mayes's and Mary Hunter's articulations are particularly useful here. See Mayes, "Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy Styles," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 214-237 and Hunter, "The *Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth-Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 43-73.

Turkish music was closely tied to the military tradition of the Janissaries.”⁸ Mayes also notes a significant divergence in genre: “representations of Hungarian-Gypsy music . . . are restricted almost exclusively to private performances suitable for domestic performance . . . [while] music *alla turca* thrived in public genres that called for large performing forces: operas and symphonies.”⁹ The *alla turca* finale of Mozart’s K. 331 and the “Rondo All’Ungarese” of Haydn’s D major piano concerto are thus deviations from this generic tendency. Only when Haydn’s music is added to the syllabus do students encounter both the norm and the exceptions to the norm in the two “exotic” styles.¹⁰

Students may then correlate generic divergence with timbre and instrumentation, two of the few parametric differences between the *alla turca* and the Hungarian-Gypsy styles. Music in the *alla turca* style most typically relies on the unique timbre of the Janissary band for its evocation—bass drum, triangle, cymbals, and sometimes tambourine and piccolo as well. Obviously, such instrumentation is reasonable only in orchestral music (in the eighteenth century, anyway). In contrast, music in the Hungarian-Gypsy style evokes *verbunk*, dance music played by a small band of Gypsy musicians that the Habsburg military used when recruiting in Hungary. Only small chamber ensembles would reasonably bring to mind the typical instrumentation of *verbunk*—two violins, cello or bass, and dulcimer.¹¹ When students engage with this larger matrix of musical characteristics and cultural resonances, especially when reading pieces that depart from the typical practice, the interpretive prospects are substantially enriched.

Among the many avenues opened up for exploration by teaching Haydn’s music in the

⁸ Mayes, “Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy Styles,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 218.

⁹ Mayes, “Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy Styles,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 225, 227.

¹⁰ As a bonus, students curious about how scholars arrive at such conclusions may even catch a glimpse at the assortment evidence one utilizes when researching the cultural matrix for a given topic: the wide range of Mayes’s eighteenth-century sources alone includes Hungarian-language newspapers, accounts of Gypsy music in Vienna, dance treatises, descriptions of Turkish music, and publishing house catalogs.

¹¹ Mayes, “Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy Styles,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 218, 227.

Hungarian-Gypsy style alongside Mozart's music in the *alla turca* style, perhaps the most important from a pedagogical perspective leads back to what is arguably the first question in any engagement with the topical dimension of a piece: how do we identify a topic? In the case of these two "exotic" styles, an interpretation that considers only the primary parameters of pitch and rhythm remains sadly impoverished. We must engage with such secondary parameters as timbre, instrumentation, and genre to access more nuanced cultural associations.¹²

III. Three entangled topics: fantasia, ombra, and Sturm und Drang

Haydn's music can also help loosen the knots that entangle three persistently tricky topics—*fantasia*, *ombra*, and the style formerly known as *Sturm und Drang*. The confusion starts with Ratner's 1980 definition of *fantasia*: "The *fantasia* style is recognized by one or more of the following features—elaborate figuration, shifting harmonies, chromatic conjunct bass lines, sudden contrasts, full textures or disembodied melodic figures—in short, a sense of improvisation and loose structural links between figures and phrases." Ratner then links the *fantasia* style directly to eighteenth-century opera and the *ombra*: "the *fantasia* style is used to evoke the supernatural—the *ombra*, representing ghosts, gods, moral values, punishments—and to bring forth feelings of awe and terror."¹³ The example he offers first, the improvisatory interruption near the end of the second movement of Haydn's String Quartet in D Minor, Op. 76 no. 2, seems stylistically and affectively quite far from his other examples, the introduction to the overture of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and the subsequent recalls of this music in the duel scene of Act I and the "supper" scene of Act II. Indeed, beyond a diminished 7th harmony and the key of D minor, these excerpts do

¹² Lawrence Zbikowski makes a similar point: "As topic theorists have come to understand, the vocabulary of topics was shared by both composers and listeners and formed a basis for musical communication beyond the ordering principles of tonality and meter. The specificity of the figures was not limited to the configurations of pitches and rhythms that distinguished one topic from another, but extended to the network of cultural associations activated by each topic." See Zbikowski, "Music, Dance, and Meaning in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Musicological Research* 31 (2012): 153.

¹³ Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 24.

not share much. Further, Ratner's musical description of the *Sturm und Drang* style could easily apply to the *ombra* music in *Don Giovanni*: "driving rhythms, full texture, minor mode harmonies, chromaticism, sharp dissonances, and an impassioned style of declamation."¹⁴ By dealing with the unfortunate entwining of these three topics, we can introduce students not just to the particular topics themselves but also to some issues in the problematic historiography of topicality in general.

In addressing Ratner's vague and conflicted delineation of the fantasia style, Haydn's music is especially helpful, as we shall see. But the fantasias of C. P. E. Bach, of course, are the obvious and usual starting point. A detailed discussion of Bach's music is beyond the scope of this essay, but Matthew Head's point that "the fantasia was not a topic so much as a *locus classicus* of C. P. E. Bach's aesthetic and technical practice as a musician" serves our present purpose. Because some of Bach's "free" fantasias "employ clear themes, are almost entirely measured, contain little recitative-like texture, and employ both rondo and sonata forms," the title fantasia does not necessarily imply "extended rhapsody" in the sense that we have come to conceive of the genre. And yet, because these pieces nonetheless contain a "distinctive type of material at home in improvisatory keyboard works and recognizable in other contexts," Head still posits a fantasia topic, but one considerably more limited than Ratner's broad category.¹⁵

The topic of improvising, or "improvisatory rhetoric" as James Webster defines it, is the linchpin here, and Haydn's music, in which an improvisatory style is a compositional fingerprint, offers the most efficient route through this tricky topical territory. Webster delineates three types of improvisatory rhetoric in Haydn's keyboard music: 1) written-out passages that would have conventionally been improvised (e.g. cadenzas); 2) passages that resemble the fantasia as a genre, varied reprises, etc.; and 3) improvisatory style as a rhetorical device. The third category speaks most directly to questions of topical identity, utility, and meaning. When the improvisatory style is used

¹⁴ Ratner, *Classic Music*, 21.

¹⁵ Matthew Head, "Fantasia and Sensibility," *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 260-61.

as a rhetorical device in a completed and notated work, the music gives an "impression of excessive freedom, unmotivated contrast, or insufficient coherence."¹⁶ Such phenomena are a matter of interpretation, as Webster rightly observes, but the examples he offers hardly seem subjective. Among them are the long quasi-rhapsodic second group in the first movement of Haydn's Keyboard Sonata in C Minor, Hob. XVI:20, in which "our virtuoso has forgotten how to cadence,"¹⁷ and the highly chromatic, toccata-like coda of the first movement of the Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Hob. XV:29.

One advantage of reconceptualizing Ratner's fantasia as improvisatory rhetoric is that it gets us out of a potential topical double-bind: many fantasias have a high degree of formal integrity while not all passages that subvert stability, rhapsodize momentarily, or seem to have lost their way are a reference to fantasia. This second actuality is especially important given the erroneous but all too common equation of fantasia and sensibility (*empfindsamer Stil*), an unfortunate if understandable linkage established for a generation of students by the ubiquity of Mozart's Fantasia in D Minor, K. 397 on intermediate piano recital programs. This piece also happens to be Ratner's only score example of sensibility in *Classic Music*. But Webster makes the finer—and more essential—point: "The significance of these passages goes beyond that of a characteristic of style. Although they are not actually improvised, they refer to the *idea* of improvising: they are improvisatory *gestures*, which transform what might otherwise be ordinary acts of improvisation into a musical topos. Improvisatory rhetoric (in this sense) is no different in principle from familiar topoi such as 'learned style,' march and dance rhythms, or 'folk' and 'popular' tunes. Like them, the topos of improvisation enters the work as the result of deliberate compositional intent; like them, it encourages us to hear a given passage in association with aspects of musical culture outside the work."¹⁸

¹⁶ James Webster, "The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn's Keyboard Music," in *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 176.

¹⁷ Webster, "The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn's Keyboard Music," 193.

¹⁸ Webster, "The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn's Keyboard Music," 207.

Although Webster's ultimate argument is far more subtle and sophisticated than the bits and pieces I have cited here might suggest (Spoiler alert: it has to do with slippage between composer, persona, and performer, among other entities.), I hope to have made two more modest points. First, the delineation of a topic of improvisation effectively disentangles *fantasia* and *ombra*. Both contain destabilizing rhetorical gestures intended to put the listener in a state of unease, but the *ombra* lacks *improvisatory* rhetoric. And second, once we acknowledge improvisatory rhetoric as a topic, it is inconceivable (if not impossible) to teach *fantasia* without Haydn's music at the front and center of the lesson (*pace* Bach).

To disentangle *ombra* and the so-called *Sturm und Drang* is more of a historiographical problem, but one that will also require splitting the topic apart, so to speak. The trouble begins in 1909 when Théodore Wyzewa linked Haydn's "stormy" symphonies from the 1770s to the emotion and subjectivity of contemporary German Romantic literature, and then hypothesized that a personal crisis in Haydn's life was responsible for this sudden shift in the composer's symphonic style.¹⁹ A satisfying story, perhaps, and one that fits with the emotionalism and turmoil of contemporary drama and art, but there are several problems. Most damaging to Wyzewa's theory is the lack of evidence that Haydn was experiencing any hardship around 1770. Further, many composers wrote similarly "stormy" music at the time, and not just in German-speaking lands.²⁰ And finally, despite the prevalence of *Sturm und Drang* in the middle symphonies, Haydn himself made use of this unsettling style in nearly all genres throughout his long career.

¹⁹ Théodore de Wyzewa, "A propos du centenaire de la mort de Joseph Haydn," in *Revue des deux mondes* 79 (1909), 944.

²⁰ H. C. Robbins Landon hears an "Austrian musical crisis" that slightly precedes the German literary *Sturm und Drang* and proposes that the impetus for this stylistic shift was primarily musical. He locates Haydn's minor-mode music composed between 1765 and 1775 within this broader crisis. There are problems with this hypothesis too, however. In addition to very little evidence for such a crisis in Austrian instrumental music, composers in Italy played a significant role in the transformation of the minor key, as Landon himself acknowledges. See H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works, Volume II. Haydn at Eszterháza, 1766-1790* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 266-84.

Many scholars have addressed the stylistic and historiographical issues,²¹ but Clive McClelland's separation of the *Sturm* from the *Drang* gets most efficiently to the heart of the problem. By offering "passion" as a more accurate translation for *Drang*, he neatly (and rightly) attaches restless and yearning music to the *empfindsamer Stil*. And by adopting the Italian word *tempesta* for all storm-related references, he acknowledges the theatrical origins of this more narrowly defined topic, as violent weather phenomena were routinely depicted with turbulent music in early opera. The incorrect notion that this "stormy" style originated in Haydn's middle symphonies is thereby neatly dismissed. Also quite elegant is the implied close relation of *tempesta* and *ombra*. Early opera's devastating storms, floods, and earthquakes were typically acts of the supernatural, "almost invariably instigated by irate deities," as McClelland puts it.²²

Indeed, *tempesta* and *ombra* may be stylistic analogs in many instances, and the list of musical characteristics they share is extensive: use of minor keys, chromatic harmonies and unusual harmonic progressions, fragmented melodic lines, chromatic stepwise motion in bass, rapid passagework, syncopation, and restless rhythmic motion.²³ But McClelland also notes several differences. Only in *ombra*, for instance, do we hear majestic or ponderous dotted rhythms, sudden contrasts in texture, an unusually low tessitura, and a prevalence of flat keys. The most significant divergence, however, is tempo: *ombra* music is slow or moderate; *tempesta* is fast. The different emotional responses elicited by the two styles—creeping fear versus frenzy—leads McClelland to propose a wonderfully subtle distinction: "*ombra* equates to horror and *tempesta* to terror."²⁴

²¹ See Barry S. Brook, "'Sturm und Drang' and the Romantic Period in Music," in *Studies in Romanticism* 9 (1970), 269-84; Larry R. Todd, "Joseph Haydn and the *Sturm und Drang*: A Reevaluation," *Music Review* 41:3 (1980), 172-96; Elaine Sisman, "Haydn's Theater Symphonies," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 43:2 (1990), 292-352; Mark Evan Bonds, "Haydn's 'Cours complet de la composition' and the *Sturm und Drang*," in *Haydn Studies*, ed. W. Dean Sutcliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 152-76; and Abigail Chandler, "The *Sturm und Drang* Style Revisited," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 34:1 (2003), 17-31.

²² Clive McClelland, "*Ombra and Tempesta*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 282.

²³ This list is derived from McClelland's excellent and handy chart comparing *ombra* and *tempesta* characteristics. See McClelland, "*Ombra and Tempesta*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 282.

²⁴ McClelland, 285.

In opera and other texted music (e.g. oratorios, masses), instances of stylistic divergence and convergence are readily apparent: "*ombra* is reserved for darkly ceremonial or ominous references, while *tempesta* applies to cataclysmic events or emotional outburst. Both will be found in infernal scenes."²⁵ But how might we interpret—or parse, even—the topics in instrumental music, where we can't rely on words, story, and narrative context for meaning? "The Representation of Chaos" in Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* provides an intermediary example, one that I have found particularly effective in the undergraduate classroom. Students easily recognize its Largo tempo, C-minor tonality, fragmented melodies, dark timbre, ponderous dotted rhythms, and somber affect as stylistic features of *ombra*, not *tempesta*. This observation can then lead students to consider Haydn's conception of chaos, for it does not readily align with their own. Rather than the more conventional understanding of chaos as disorder, an idea that lends itself more to the musical storminess of *tempesta*, Haydn's chaos is eerie—that irrational and infinite void that preceded God's creation of the heavens and earth.²⁶ Because the composer's representational intentions are unambiguous in this case, students get to penetrating questions of meaning and interpretation more quickly.

In the case of "purely" instrumental music, however, questions of musical meaning are more open-ended. Students may now easily identify unsettling minor-mode interruptions in otherwise calm and pleasant slow movements as an *ombra* topic or hear clear echoes of operatic storms in the *tempesta* passages in fast movements. But they often remain perplexed by what extramusical meaning—if any—they should attach to these topical references. With an abundance of agitated moments and movements, Haydn's symphonies offer countless opportunities to explore such questions beyond echoes of singing statues and stormy days of wrath. Is a fearsome deity necessarily passing judgment in the *ombra* passages in the slow movements of Symphonies Nos. 93 and 99? Is the weather really kicking up in the Allegro movements of Symphonies Nos. 26, 45, and 49? Without obvious resemblances to well known texted music, how else

²⁵ McClelland, 285-86.

²⁶ For more on Haydn's generation of this particular eeriness, see Lowe, "Creating Chaos in Haydn's *Creation*," *HAYDN: Online Journal of the Haydn Society of North America* 2:2 (2013).

might we read these topical references? These questions may be unanswerable, but I have found that undergraduates especially enjoy entertaining them. More to the point, once equipped with even small doses of Enlightenment aesthetics, cultural and compositional contexts, and reception histories of specific works, students come to truly appreciate the centrality of topic theory and analysis in the interpretative enterprise.

IV. Keeping pace with Mozart

By way of conclusion, I encourage instructors to seek out the invaluable resource that is *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*. Mozart still dominates the conversation in this book (nearly all of the individual chapter-length case studies are devoted to his music), but Haydn gets considerable airtime. Indeed, rather than the "hoary example" that is Mozart's Piano Sonata, K. 332, the finale of Haydn's Symphony No. 104, surprisingly, opens Mary Hunter's chapter on "Topics and Opera Buffa." In the exposition alone, she hears "variously delicate and heavy footed peasant dances rub[bing] shoulders with contrapuntal devices both apparently 'popular' and obtrusively learned, with 'Turkish' moments, identified by repetitive or awkward rhythms and crude harmonies or by the lack of any harmony at all, with opera-buffa scurrying, and performative brilliance."²⁷ Right out of the gate Hunter's choice demonstrates that Haydn's topical discourse can keep pace with Mozart's rapid-fire delivery and juxtaposition of contrasting topics, stylistic registers, and expressive modes.²⁸ So may our students come to appreciate Haydn's topical art, but only if we give his music equal billing in the classroom.

²⁷ Hunter, "Topics and Opera Buffa," 62. Measure number references omitted here.

²⁸ Such topical variety and interaction in Haydn's instrumental music was heard as distinctly theatrical by the critics and commentators of the time. See Elaine Sisman, "Haydn, Shakespeare, and the Rules of Originality," in *Haydn and his World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); and Hunter, "Topics and Opera Buffa," *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 62-65.

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