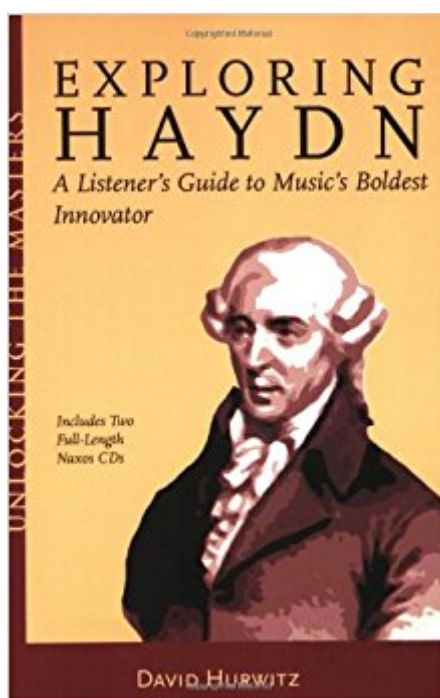


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Unlocking The Masters Series: Exploring Haydn - A Listener's Guide To Music's Boldest Innovator - Book/CD



Synopsis

(Unlocking the Masters). No composer has ever achieved the amazing progression that Haydn has. He invented the string quartet as we know it today, became "the Father of the Symphony," and founded the greatest school in the history of music. His life was one of ceaseless experimentation and invention, of problems surmounted and challenges met. In this book, No. 6 in the Amadeus Press Unlocking the Masters series, David Hurwitz acquaints readers with Haydn's innovative melodic creativity, his revolutionary use of musical form, and important characteristics of his personal style, including his genius for writing in minor keys and creating comedy in his music. In addition to Haydn's principal instrumental works, Hurwitz explores Haydn's vocal music and instrumental masterpieces that fall outside the mainstream. Four appendixes list all of his symphonies, string quartets, piano sonatas, and piano trios. Over two and a half hours of music keyed to pieces described in the book are available online using the unique code in each book.

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Customer Reviews

". . . a splendid book; one of the best in the extensive literature on Haydn." -- American Reference Books Annual 2006, Vol. 37". . . beautifully planned, engagingly written and filled with wisdom." -- American Music Teacher, April/May 2006". . . fills a gap in the music-appreciation literature." -- Choice, April 2006"Hurwitz pitches his prose perfectly to embrace an audience of varying expertise." --The Tennessean, January 22, 2006

perfect

David Hurwitz, the author of this absorbing package that includes a 200-page book and two CDs, suffers from the same disability as myself, namely, why should it be necessary to open the musical public's ears to the wonder of Franz Joseph Haydn? The book is in three sections: Part 1 Extraordinary Musician, Ordinary Man. Part 2 Movement Types in Haydn's Instrumental Music. Part 3 A Topical View. The author explores and expands his themes in depth. But the text is far from dry or lacking in imagination, on the contrary I would go so far as to say that in many respects his analysis is both original and stimulating. And so, I repeat, why it is that a composer of so-called classical music who could be hailed as the greatest living composer at the close of the 18th Century should require vigorous resuscitation in our times in order to present the man as the equal of Mozart and Beethoven. Is it just a question of changing fashions or has Haydn simply been misrepresented latterly, or what . . . ? But there is more to it than that: all but a handful or so of professional so-called classical musicians have much in the way of a Haydn background and appreciation of this composer's worth. And the musicologists could do better. Take this from the first edition of Dent's Haydn, Master Musicians Series (Author: J Cuthbert Hadden, 1902), summarising the composer's contribution we find (p. 183): That he was not deep, that he does not speak a message of the inner life to the latter-day individual, who, in the Ossianic phrase, likes to indulge in "the luxury of grief", must, of course be admitted. And it is not long before comparisons with Beethoven crop up: The definite embodiment of feeling which we find in Beethoven is not to be found in him. Contrast this with what Hurwitz has to say in his summing up (page 180): 'If history has in fact decided that Haydn was the founding member of the most important musical school that has ever existed, then why not give him the time and attention he deserves and approach his creations with minds open to what they have to say? Haydn is "deep" music: the more you listen, the more you hear and the better it sounds.' Before we go any further perhaps we should look at the prerequisites for celebrity status (for it may be reasonable to regard Beethoven and Mozart as celebrities in their day in a way that Haydn was not?). Of course the basis for our analysis will make several assumptions not least the universal criteria applicable, or not, in two periods separated by two centuries. (Today's media dissemination via radio and television into the earlobes and eyes sockets of billions knew no parallel in Haydn's time.) And so, who is likely to figure more prominently in the people's esteem or perception, the craftsman or the virtuoso? I submit that our preoccupation with celebrities has forced the craftsman into the background. In music, for example, both Mozart and Beethoven, as

instrumental virtuosi (and Mozart in particular having been a child prodigy on keyboard if not on violin) will appeal more to the masses than a Bach or a Haydn (both acknowledged as among music's greatest craftsmen). And the personal circumstance of early death (in the case of Mozart) and the progressive deafness and premature death, in the case of Beethoven, cannot be ignored as appealing to the public's imagination. (A cosseted child prodigy, Mozart, compared to the physical hardships of the young, diligent Haydn?) Johannes Brahms, for example, represents a happy synthesis of the two: a virtuoso pianist emerging from many hardships in early life into a fine craftsman (with overtones in his personal life - the Schumann connections). But I suspect it is the craftsmanship in the case of Brahms that makes him the staple diet of the contemporary music scene at all levels from instrumentalists and musicologists to the "passive" listener. So, why not Haydn? Could it be that there are as many ill-informed musicians on Haydn today as was Robert Schumann when he declared that Haydn had little to offer the musician of his day? Could it be the fault of the impresario? Could it be the fault of the musicologists? (Ref: H. C. Robbins Landon Mozart's 1791 Last Year, preface, final page. Is this a fair or reasonable representation of Haydn in relation to Mozart as a man and as a musician?) Hurwitz may not answer this question outright but his treatment of the composer should leave the reader/listener in no doubt that those who sidetrack Haydn have lost their way.

Exploring Haydn: A Listener's Guide To Music's Boldest Innovator is a book and music CD set that introduces the reader to the life and works of Haydn. An astonishingly creative genius, Haydn invented the string quartet as it is known today, earned the title of "The Father of the Symphony", and mentored the renowned Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Author David Hurwitz guides the reader through a brief tour of Haydn's life, a close discussion of Haydn's instrumental music including first movements, slow movements, minuets, scherzos, and finales, and a topical view of Haydn's art and works. Two full-length Naxos CDs, filled with more than two and a half hours of beautiful music keyed to pieces described in the text, allow the reader to experience Haydn's music firsthand. Highly recommended for lay readers, novice music scholars, and anyone seeking a greater understanding and appreciation of Haydn's monumental legacy.

Haydn was original, he was prolific, he was popular, and he is just plain fun to listen to. This book provides glimpses of his personal life, (including his friendship with Mozart), his creative process, and recordings of a huge variety of his music on two discs. You could spend this much on the music alone, but the analysis helps you truly appreciate Haydn's wit and his imagination.

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