

**Chamber Music Seminar:
Prof. Edward A. Parson, Michigan Law School, 2007-2008:**

Administrative Information:

Six Wednesday evenings, 8:00 – 10:00 PM

Not for credit:

Enrollment limit: 12

Notes for the First Session, October 10

Chamber music intro:

- What it is: from early (17C) classification – chamber, church, theatre music – stabilized mid-18C as a) usu instruments (not voices); b) small groups (2 – 8 or 9) with no doubling, no conductor,
- Intensely collaborative (but how? Is there a leader?) – In modern terms, players are understood as equals; but often historically led/named for 1st violin.
- Chamber music is a powerful metaphor, model for group DM, conflict resolution – classic Richard Hackman studies of DM in groups; Several law school classes have used chamber groups in sessions on negotiation and conflict resolution – e.g., recent sessions at Stanford using St. Lawrence Quartet in residence.
- Chamber music comes in many forms, but the richest repertoire is for string quartets. This form was essentially created, and certainly standardized, canonized by Haydn in his ~ 70-80 of them. Subsequent masterpieces by Mozart, Beethoven, others through 19th and 20th C, all owe powerful debt to Haydn.

Haydn: (1732-1809)

- Employed by noble Esterhazy family (appted 1761 at age 29, stayed 29 years under 3 counts) – music director, with staff, wrote, conducted, played, taught.
- Last great musician to live happily under patronage system – a genius employed as a high-status servant – admittedly, by an unusually cultivated and benevolent succession of masters (except the third)
- Benevolent, devout, diligent, widely beloved – suffered from writers’ block, prayed for melodies. (but how bad can it have been?)
- Had excellent musicians to work with; quiet environment (Eisenstadt and Esterhaza), isolated from hubbub and fads of Vienna; Extraordinary innovation and experimentation. “Almost everything about SQ either initiated or consolidated by Haydn, or both”
- Major musical trends of the period of his productive life (mid-late 18th C)

- Consolidation of key system: provided tools to navigate more remote exploration in one piece, bigger and more dramatic forms.
- Great masters of stringed instruments – increased virtuosity, composers can do more (and rise in status of instrumental rel to vocal – formerly inferior)
- Shift in styles: old Bach polyphonic (contrapuntal, linear) music – out of fashion, early 18th C “thinned out” – one lead melody with accompaniment (rise of Opera – needed to hear the words)
- Accompanying shift in style preference: from serious, intense, and religious, toward light and diverting: Remember: what we call “classical”, “art” music was the popular music to aristocratic classes of 18th C – we’re confused because history has filtered out the drek. “Style gallant” – leading instrument, playing courtly (banal) melodies, impressive passage-work. These musicians were the Neil Diamonds of their day (e.g., Boccherini). This style is also a practical response to shortage of skills – only the lead player has to be good, while the other parts are playable by moderately skilled amateurs.
- Haydn did it all: style variation, experimentation, integration over career: exemplified in many forms (e.g., 104 symphonies), but esp clear in ~70 quartets – most of them neatly bundled into groups of six.
 - Character: style gallant; Sturm und Drang; re-introduction of contrapuntal writing; integration – with two unique personal elements: humor; heavy, rustic, peasant-like character (folk songs and dances)
 - Quartets – started with large, flabby structure like divertimenti, serenades, standardized on 4-movement form (standard for all major instrumental works – fast, slow, medium, fast)
 - 1790, 3rd Prince “musical bonehead”, fired most musicians, pensioned Haydn off – he moved to Vienna – a rock-star, lived on commissions, performances, lessons (took on two talented students – Mozart; Beethoven); made two triumphant trips to London – public performances, with professional players, to paying audience, in bigger halls. For these, he needed works of bigger scale, with more drama – to fill the larger performance spaces, and hold the attention of a larger, less elite audience. Several of his late quartets were written for these trips (incl op 74 we’re going to hear), others commissioned on return. (incl most famous “Kaiser quartet”, op 76 no 3 – slow movement hymn for Kaiser, inspired by God Save the King, became German national anthem from 1922)

Quartet op 74 no 3, “the rider” (1793)

- Now standard 4-movement structure: Fast in sonata form (sometimes with slow intro); slow; minuet (moderately fast); fast finale.
- First movement: “sonata form” (confusing term)
 - Richest formal structure to support longer works, bigger expressive range:
 - Basic shape: departure/ return; expressed in contrasting themes and key relationships.
 - Essential elements: “exposition” stating a theme or subject in the home key; modulation to another related key, stating a second, usually contrasting theme

or subject; “development,” in which thematic elements from exposition are developed, transformed, broken apart, re-combined, etc – return home to “recapitulation” – restating both subjects in home key; plus various things to end it (“coda”)

- Second movement: Slow; in remote key; intense, tragic; modified ABA’ form; (note: rare to see sonata form in slow movements – complex forms in slow movement take too long)
- Third movement: Minuet and Trio (ABA form)– something light and simple to follow tragic intensity of slow movements – general progression to faster – ironic, later movement to scherzo (sometimes even rearrange movements – put it second, no longer serving purpose of restoring levity after intensity)
- Finale: rapid; dramatic; sonata form.

Mozart: Quartet K. 464 in A+

- Mozart: 1756 – 1791 – 24 yrs younger than Haydn but pre-deceased him; moved to Vienna ~ 1780, escape provincial life of Salzburg – miserable experience of patronage.
- Popular images of Mozart – my education, Apollonian; vs modern image inspired by exaggeration of Amadeus. Not quite like John Malkovich, but was extravagant, dissipated, scatological humor;
- Befriended Haydn in Vienna (Late in his employ at Esterhaza, Haydn got to spend some time in Vienna) – played quartets together in 1784-1785 – mostly Haydn’s – with two “lesser composers”, Vanhal and Dittersdorf.
- Mozart’s early attempts at quartets pretty weak – inspired by Haydn’s example, composed his own group of six 1782-1786 – dedicated to Haydn (note— foregoing a revenue opportunity) –
- (Only four subsequently – 3 King of Prussia)
- Character: more fluid, effortless with melodies (didn’t have to pray for them); more elegant, “metropolitan” – less peasant-like, less humor overall and it’s more sophisticated; unfavorably received – too complex, too straining for novelty.

Beethoven: Quartet in A, Op 18 No 5.

- Beethoven – 1770-1827; 14 yrs younger than Mozart; arrived Vienna
- Group of six quartets published 1800-1801 – performed by Schupanzigh quartet (who did all his quartets)
- A+ modeled on Mozart’s 464.
- Style: larger dramatic scale; tighter, more abstract subjects (often not much like melodies at all); pushing expressive limits of instruments with sudden dynamic changes, accents;