

# Haydn Society of Great Britain



## No 2 – June 2021

Welcome to our latest edition

### Newsletter

In this second Newsletter, we note that in BBC Radio 3's most recent *Building a Library* programme on May 1st, Richard Wigmore was spoilt for choice in the many different extant CD versions of Haydn's Symphony No 92 'The Oxford'. His final recommendation was **Paavo Berglund** conducting the **Finnish Chamber Orchestra** on Ondine ODE8012.

Once again the English Haydn Festival has to be cancelled because lifting of restrictions came one week too late for the planned June Festival to take place. They have however informed us that they have managed to organise a concert day on Saturday 11th September this year at St Mary's Church Bridgnorth with a lunchtime concert by the Consone Quartet and an evening orchestral concert.

#### **The programme for the Consone Quartet is:**

Mozart Dissonance Quartet K465 in C

Haydn Quartet Opus 33 No 4 in Bb major

#### **The Evening Concert programme features Beethoven and of course Haydn:**

Beethoven: Coriolan Overture Opus 62.

Beethoven: Violin Romance No 2 in F (Simon Standage - violin)

Beethoven: Symphony No.2 in D

*Interval 30 minutes*

Haydn: Piano Concerto No. 11 in D (Steven Devine - piano)

Haydn Symphony No.104 in D

conductor: Steven Devine

## NEW RELEASES



**Joseph Haydn: String Quartets Op. 76 Nos. 4-6**

**Chiaroscuro Quartet**

**Alina Ibragimova : violin I**

**Pablo Hermán Benedi: violin II**

**Emelie Hörnlund: viol**

**Claire Thirion: cello**

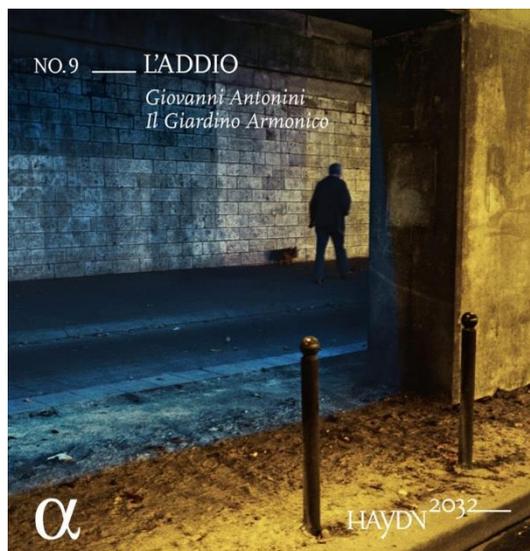
**BIS-2348 (SACD) 70:54 mins**

The Chiaroscuro Quartet is truly pan-European, their nationalities being respectively Russian, Spanish, Swedish and French. In concert they play standing (except for cello) and tend to move about but their movements always seem relevant to the music. Perhaps this gives rise to the freedom of expression which is a feature of these recorded performances where phrases are stretched and moulded but basic tempo remains untroubled.

Shaping and moulding could be a dangerous practice in dance movements but Chiaroscuro gets away with it. Haydn sometimes makes small musical asides - particularly in the Minuet of No.4. This leads the players to exaggerate these amusing moments but without impeding musical flow. The somewhat swift tempi of the other Minuets are justified because it enhances the surge of both the trios. In that of No.6, urgency makes the grandfatherly cello solo even more delightful.

Perhaps the 'Sunrise' title of the first movement is a slight handicap because the calm opening theme is followed by a forward push at the first *forte*. This contradicts the sun's steady progress so ignore the title and the sudden burst of brightness makes sense. The unusual variation form that opens Nos. 5 & 6, starting *Allegretto* but progressing to *Allegro*, means that both movements are imbued with dramatic expression. In all the slow movements gentility and sensitivity abound, enhanced by the sweetness of tone achieved through the use of the gut strung period instruments. The hugely rapid *Finale* to No.6 makes a delightful close to this stylish set of performances.

*Antony Hodgson*



***Symphonies Nos 35, 45 (Farewell) & 15 and Scena di Berenice***  
***Sandrine Piau (soprano)***  
***Il Giardino Armonico/Giovanni Antonini***  
***Alpha Classics ALPHA 684***

This latest release in Alpha's extended project to record all the Haydn symphonies by the 300th anniversary of his birth in 2032 presents four works including the famous *Scena di Berenice* dating from the composer's final visit to London. Under the collective title *Haydn 2032*, the conductor, Giovanni Antonini, has taken the unusual step of grouping the symphonies around particular emotional themes such as '*Il distratto*', '*La Passione*' rather than in chronological order. This is a refreshing idea, but the outcome is not always particularly convincing.

On this CD for example, the concept of 'farewell' connects admirably with the 45th Symphony and the *Scena di Berenice* premièred at Haydn's last concert before leaving London for good in 1795. But the inclusion of the other two symphonies is more awkward. As the booklet endeavours to explain, No 35 may have been connected with Prince Esterházy's delayed return journeys from France to Austria in 1767. But it is surely more of a 'welcome' work that a 'valedictory' one. The inclusion of Symphony No 15 seems mainly justified because it also dates from the 1760s.

Happily, the performances themselves are excellent. Antonini brings much enjoyable wisdom and vitality to these works. In *The Farewell* for example, he and his period orchestra's powerfully turbulent reading of the opening movement contrasts strikingly with the delicate calmness of the final *Adagio*. Elsewhere on the disc, he draws similarly elegantly nuanced playing from his forces. In the *Scena di Berenice*, Sandrine Piau joins the ensemble to give a strong performance of the composer's solo cantata for Brigida Banti, written for his farewell Benefit Night on May 4th, 1795.

*Denis McCaldin*

# HISTORIC RECORDING PIONEERS

## HARRY NEWSTONE



This month marks the centenary of the birth on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1921 of Harry Newstone to Russian Parents living in Canada. Three years later the family moved to London.. Newstone is best remembered for founding the Haydn Orchestra which he launched at the Conway Hall, London on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1949. In that same year he also found time to guest conduct with the Nashville Symphony.

Unfortunately he left only a very small recorded legacy - a mere dozen or so recordings although they received excellent critical acclaim - notably his Mozart *Jupiter* and his set of Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*. Haydn recordings were confined to Symphonies 49 and 73 on a harsh-sounding Nixa LP (which sounds rather well in a CD refurbishment) a fine Loiseau-Lyre recording of Symphonies 46 and 52 and a disc featuring *Scena di Berenice* with Jennifer Vyvyan. There is also a talk recorded on video entitled *Haydn the Middle Years* with musical examples ending with a filmed performance of Haydn's *La Chasse* Symphony.

Orchestras of the 1950s and 60s made few concessions to 'authenticity'. This was long before the era of 'period' instruments but the Haydn Orchestra had a very stylish approach. Newstone took the precaution of ensuring that his modern instruments represented earlier timbres. For example he insisted on strong, rustic horn tone in order to parallel the timbre of the old unvalved instruments. Hard-headed timpani sticks were used and above all the then fashionable smooth, vibrato-laden string-phrasing was avoided. At this time Newstone also guest-conducted most of the British orchestras and eventually became conductor of the BBC Welsh Orchestra,

He continued with the Haydn Orchestra until in 1965 he was appointed conductor of the Sacramento Symphony, staying there for eleven years before returning to England as Director of Music at the University of Kent and Professor of Conducting at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Eventually he moved to Victoria, B.C. where he

taught conducting at the Victoria Conservatory of Music also directing CBC Chamber Orchestra in Vancouver.

Although there are very few commercial recordings to his credit, Harry Newstone is a true ‘Historic Recording Pioneer’ through the huge number of broadcasts of which tapes exist, many of them from BBC broadcasts. Even when considering only Haydn Orchestra performances, forty-seven symphonies are in the Newstone tape archive together with choral works but presumably copyright hinders commercial release.

His centenary will also be celebrated in the 2021 Journal where his Haydn-related career will be given in greater detail.

*Antony Hodgson*

## MEMBERS’ AREA

Conductor and member Ian Page writes,



‘The Mozartists continue their visionary MOZART 250 series at Cadogan Hall this July with our first concert since lockdown: a diverse overview of the musical year 1771. The programme includes an un-numbered Mozart symphony, vocal rarities by Mysliveček and Salieri and an original concerto by C. P. E. Bach, culminating with Haydn’s magnificent ‘Trauer’ symphony No 44. Mezzo-soprano [Kitty Whately](#) and harpsichordist [Steven Devine](#) join me and our outstanding period-instrument orchestra. For more information and tickets, please visit us at [www.mozartists.com/whats-on/](http://www.mozartists.com/whats-on/)’



### **Ganer square piano 1781**

Dr Derek McCulloch is asking who might give a good home to a Ganer square piano 1781, almost identical to an instrument used by JC Bach? Open to serious keyboard players, instrument collections, University Music Departments. Restored 1984 by Tim Hamilton but in need of renewed restoration. Enquiries to [drderek.mcculloch@gmail.com](mailto:drderek.mcculloch@gmail.com) Mp3 of Haydn e-minor sonata (Paul Nicholson) available on request.