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Haydn Symphonies

Haydn Symphonies 90, 91, and 92: Unity and Contrast within a Set

Haydn's late symphonies are often considered as sets. For example, much has been written comparing the composer's works composed expressly for Paris or for London. Because the symphonies 90-92 were composed after the Paris works but before Haydn left for London, they are situated at a crucial junction of the composer's career. By the late 1770s, the composer had had scored a significant success with the six symphonies for Paris; Haydn's patron at Esterhazy would die in 1790 and the composer would be free to travel. In between the Paris works and his momentous trip to England, Haydn composed five symphonies. Two (nos. 88 and 89) were sold in Vienna by the violinist Johann Tost in the so-called "Tost Affair." The remaining three were composed to satisfy requests from Paris and a count in south Germany. Although not formally a set, the numbers 90-92 share many attributes. Of the three, only the third, no. 92, is performed regularly; yet, Greenberg notes that the set contains "some of Haydn's most exciting and sophisticated symphonic writing, presenting a dazzling mixture of contrapuntal complexity, high humor, and subtle wit... James Webster has dubbed them 'an undeclared opus,' and Ludwig Finscher called them a 'trptych,' with No. 91 the centerpiece framed by two outer works, Nos. 90 and 92. Situated as they are just before the light and attractive melodies and popular style of the London symphonies, these works represent a particularly condensed effort on Haydn's behalf

to incorporate contrapuntal elements.”¹ On the surface, each of the three symphonies displays a notable influence of an earlier work: The symphony no. 90 in C major shows significant influence of the Symphony no. 82, “L’Ours” as both works have a brilliant, C major first movement and a slow movement that is a set of variations alternating F major and minor; additionally, the Minuet of no. 90 “re-uses the tonal plan of the Trio of no. 82.”² No. 91 displays influence of no. 84 as it uses the same key, a slow triple-time intro, and the Finale of 91 “recalls the first movement of no. 84.”³ More subtly, Landon notes that the Minuet of no. 92 “is on the same large symphonic scale as that of 86, and with a large middle, or ‘development’ section.”⁴ Are there other musical reasons to consider these works a set, or are they just three unrelated pieces composed at a transitional point in the composer’s career? Although each member of the set 90-92 is unique, study of these three works has revealed subtle correspondences and striking relations of orchestration, the significant role of introductions, harmonic features, formal details, and melodic interactions that indicate the three should be considered a set. This paper will examine each area to identify means which provide unify or contrast to the set.

Instrumentation and orchestration

Landon claims that Haydn kept his home band in mind when composing this work: while Paris had two flutes and probably clarinets, Esterhazy had none, so symphonies of the period still have

¹ Yoel Greenberg, “Minding a Gap: ‘Active Transitions’ from the Slow Introduction to the Fast Section in Haydn’s Symphonies,” *Journal of Musicology* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 308.

² H. C. Robbins Landon and David Wyn Jones, *Haydn: His Life and Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 224.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works, Vol. 2, Haydn at Eszterháza, 1766–1790* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 634.

no clarinets and only one flute. Landon continues that “another specialty at Esterhazy were the C alto horns which took the place of trumpets in festive works with kettledrums.”⁵ The instruments would have been unknown in Paris or London; when the work was played at Esterhazy, Haydn used high horns and omitted the trumpets, but when he played in London, we know he used the trumpets.⁶ Landon also notes that “Haydn had used the horns, up to now, mostly in their highest and middle registers. Now with the exploration of the lowest register, a whole new world is opened... Although Haydn’s virtuoso high-horn writing gradually faded away, except for occasional reminders, the low horn’s colour remained with his scores for the rest of his life.”⁷ Indeed, Haydn uses horns in the low register extensively in these three symphonies and examples include the long pedal low G at beginning of 91/1, many extended low Gs in 92/1 and the end of 92/2, and the solos for second horn in the Finale of no. 92. One also notes an increasing freedom for the winds in these symphonies and extended passages for soloists.⁸ Writing for the bassoon is especially independent and that player has solos in almost every movement of the set. Of particular note is the flowering of long wind band solos; the following table illustrates an example in over half of the twelve movements being considered.

⁵ Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle*, 631-32.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle*, 358.

⁸ A. Peter Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 2, *The First Golden Age of the Viennese Symphony: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 214.

Long wind band solos	
Movement	Location
90/3	Trio. Strings accompany.
90/4	m. 230-231
91/3	bsn solo in Trio
91/4	m. 77-64
92/1	m. 91-94
92/2	m. 56-60 and very long one m. 98-106
92/4	m. 299-306

Used to impart an air of festivity in symphonies no. 90 and 92, trumpets and drums are absent from no. 91 which is Haydn's last symphony without the instruments. In the case of the "Oxford," they are missing in the autograph and first edition of Le Duc, but are in manuscript parts sent to Wallerstein.⁹ Landon seems correct to consider them likely a late addition, added after the autograph¹⁰. In that work, trumpets and timpani are deployed very unexpectedly, but to great shock and surprise, in the Adagio. In the Finale of that work, trumpets notably enter *piano* at m. 178's false recapitulation in C major with great coloristic effect, one of few instances in Haydn's symphonies of trumpets playing alone, without the horns.

While most of Haydn's symphonies have cello and double bass double parts, especially the early ones, 91 and 92 have separate and mostly autonomous parts. The independent cello line gives a richness, and "nowhere was it use to such telling effect as at the beginning of the slow intro of no. 92"¹¹ as the cello takes the takes the luscious main line while the double bass supports.

Of this set, the Finales all are melodic and homophonic, with a clear tune scored over a formulaic bass: The Finales of no. 90 and no. 91 employ the Alberti bass, but no. 92 employs the

⁹ Landon, *Chronicle*, 633.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Brown, *Symphonic Repertoire*, 240.

so-called “murky” bass, beginning “with bizarre effect, the theme in the first violins over nothing except bare octaves in the cello.”¹² This overused scoring device had been criticized in works by Haydn’s less creative contemporaries, and Haydn likely used it here to highlight his later remarkable contrapuntal treatments of the theme. Curiously, Haydn emphasizes the frivolous nature of the “murky bass” by employing it frequently and in “every instrument that can negotiate the bass register, including some that, like the second horn, often cannot.”¹³ Brown continues to explain Haydn’s use of the “murky bass” as “as a foil for a theme ornamented by chromaticism.” Interestingly, Landon notes that that later editors inserted harmony at the starkly bare opening of this Finale, “but the autograph and other authentic sources make Haydn’s bold intentions perfectly clear.”¹⁴

Introductions

Each work of the set has an introduction which is quite special and shows Haydn making new formal experiments. The introduction to no. 90, extremely significant and unique, is Haydn’s first instance of reusing thematic material from the introduction later in the movement;¹⁵ in it, the primary theme is stated in slow motion. Greenberg notes a peculiar three-motive cycle which binds the introduction to the ensuing Allegro. The three ingredients are as follows: 1) opening measure and upbeat that establishes tonic; 2) the motive of repeated descending seconds; 3) the main motto of repeated notes in m. 5-8. Haydn repeats these three figures in a cycle that

¹² Landon, *Chronicle*, 634.

¹³ Brown, *Symphonic Repertoire*, 242.

¹⁴ Landon, *Chronicle* 634.

¹⁵ Greenberg, 313.

generates the movement's thematic content. As illustrated in the following table, the second cycle begins in m. 8; the third in m. 20.

Motivic cycle of Symphony No. 90, movement 1

	Motive 1: Tonic	Motive 2: Repeated descending seconds	Motive 3: Repeated notes
First cycle	<i>Adagio</i> : m. 1	m. 2-4	m. 5-8
Second cycle	m. 8	m. 9-10	<i>Allegro assai</i> : m. 17
Third cycle	m. 20	m. 21-24 (augmented, in oboes)	m. 29

Shaded area: Allegro assai.

With the tempo changing in the middle of the second cycle, the introduction is bound structurally to the Allegro. Greenberg notes that “unlike previous introductions, where the change of tempo corresponds to changes in texture, orchestration, character, and meter, here none of these factors is affected. Instead, Haydn subordinates the tempo change.”¹⁶ The double bar is highly transparent “to everything except tempo, rendering the acceleration from Adagio to Allegro assai the central issue of the transition.”¹⁷ This gesture sets up the idea of deceleration-acceleration, which recurs similarly in m. 147-154 (preparing the recapitulation) and at the very end of the movement (m. 218). Thus we see in this work Haydn introducing motives used later in the movement and structurally linking the introduction to the following section.

The introduction to no. 91 involves more subtle connections to the movement proper than those involved in no. 90. Brown notes that “With its pure and solid authentic cadences, it stands as the tonal foundation for a movement that otherwise wanders in a fantasia-like manner.”¹⁸

Greenberg notes a beautiful symmetry by melodic links from the introduction into the Allegro¹⁹

¹⁶ Greenberg, 313.

¹⁷ Ibid, 315.

¹⁸ Brown, *Symphonic Repertoire*, 238.

¹⁹ Greenberg, 309.

as both introduction and primary theme rely on the stepwise third (recalled later in the theme of Minuet). Another theme is mirror symmetry: written in counterpoint at the octave, the rising main theme is reflected both vertically, in the descending cello line, and horizontally, “when the violins take up the same descending line. The nature of the transition thus blends in neatly with the type of contrapuntal texture that immediately follows.”²⁰ He also notes a large melodic connection between the introduction and Allegro: The first violins descend a tenth in stepwise fashion from high Bb (m. 15) to G (m. 21), and reascend when the tempo picks up, reattaining the high Bb again at m. 26. A beautiful symmetry emerges as the descent and ascent take the same number of measures (seven) to traverse the same pitch space. He also notes that this phenomenon is further framed by a simple stepwise third on either side (m. 12-15 and m. 27 in violins). When considered with other relationships of character, these melodic relationships indicate a depth of relationship between introduction and following material of the “kind of depth is characteristic not only of this symphony but of the entire set.”²¹

Having identified connections between introduction and first movement’s main portion in symphonies no. 90 and 91, this trend is most developed in 92’s extraordinary introduction. As in nos. 90 and 91, there is a melodic connection within the “Oxford” as all material of main theme is derived from introduction, and Burstein went so far as to note that “the first phrase of the exposition is so tightly connected to the previous material that it indeed seems to parody the introduction.”²² The opening notes of the fast section “conclude the consequent phrase of the

²⁰ Greenberg, 309.

²¹ Ibid, 310.

²² Ibid, 298.

introduction,”²³ and harmonically, the introduction is extremely unstable as it constantly avoids the tonic, instead coming to rest on an augmented sixth sonority under a melodic diminished seventh. The work begins with stable harmony and phrasing but soon breaks down that stability, ultimately ending in a sea of ambiguity. “The augmented sixth is sustained to excruciating length, and the rhythm becomes increasingly obscure,” culminating in the extraordinary unsupported diminished seventh of m. 20,²⁴ at which point the listener wonders “Which is the governing pitch, D or Eb?” Dissonance is an element of the symphony and the idea begins in the introduction as sighing, cadential figures in m. 4 and 8 and suspensions in m. 3 and 7. Dissonance grows into intense prolongations of b6 in m. 13-20. Dissonance is expressed melodically by the C# to C-natural figure, which gradually grows in prominence. First occurring as an ordinary chromatic neighbor in an inner voice of m. 8, Webster notes that the C# “becomes a prominent melodic passing-tone (m. 11), a disquieting chromatic descent (m. 13), and the most prominent note of the critical augmented 6th chord; in the last bar, naked and followed by silence, it seems to bear the weight of the entire introduction. In fact, the entire introduction may be best understood as prolonging this descending chromatic motive:” the opening D at beginning, to C#, to C-natural.²⁵ This introduction is also remarkable for its “adherence to **soft dynamics**: only two of twenty measures are marked above piano.”²⁶

²³ Greenberg, 298.

²⁴ James Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style: Through-composition and Cyclic Integration in his Instrumental Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 169.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Greenberg, 310.

Greenberg notes that the “set marks start of consistent use of introductions in a meter related to movement” and that “thematic material that is unequivocally common to the two sections is also first observed in this set.”²⁷ Although introductions to all of Haydn’s earlier symphonies ended on the dominant, those of 90 and 92 end on pre-dominant chords with a prominent #4 that resolve to dominant once the tempo picks up and arrive at a structural cadence four of five beats later with changes of dynamics and texture,²⁸ “attesting that Haydn is exploring a new approach to the transition in these symphonies.”²⁹ In earlier works, the “slow introduction was an opening gesture but not necessarily an integral part of the movement,”³⁰ but in these three works, we see Haydn definitely reimagining the role of the introduction and exploring various possibilities of linking it to the movement proper. Introductions are now experienced hurling into an Allegro already in motion. Haydn creates the effect by harmonic suspense, thematic progressions already in progress, melodic connections literally bridging across. Greenberg notes that there is an “emerging conception of the slow introduction as an integral and inseparable part of the opening movement, capable of generating the material of the fast section and setting it into motion,”³¹ and we see, by extension, “the introduction becoming yet another crucial formal unit within a movement.”³²

Greenberg argues persuasively that these introductions are separated from their Allegros by a rest that has been philosophically transformed from a silence into something active. “Rather

²⁷ Greenberg, 319.

²⁸ Webster, 164.

²⁹ Greenberg, 308.

³⁰ Ibid, 319.

³¹ Ibid, 320.

³² Ibid, 321.

than being constrained to the status of a passive mark of separation, a double bar or formal juncture can function as a prism that actively transforms the music in a particular way.”³³ He views symphonies 90-92 as the pinnacle of Haydn’s symphonic corpus regarding an active transition between introduction and movement proper. Although no. 90 is the first to incorporate exact thematic correspondences and Haydn expanded the idea in the London symphonies, Greenberg declares that “the depth, thoroughness, and imaginativeness of active transitions in symphonies 90-92, as well as their systematic exploration throughout the set, remain unsurpassed in the London symphonies.”³⁴ And unlike the London symphonies in which he tended to be more preoccupied with thematic integration, this set “represents a peak in Haydn’s exploration of active transitions” because of their substantial means of generating new from old.³⁵ “The fact that Haydn was preoccupied in these three symphonies with the problem of the transition out of the slow introduction is yet another reason to view them as a set.”³⁶

Harmony

Numerous harmonic features are curiously present in Haydn’s symphonies 90-92, namely reliance on the flat 6, Db as exotic diversion, general instability, dissonance, striking or unusual progressions, and exploiting inherent colors of tonal centers. Sometimes expressed as an augmented sixth sonority or passing occurrence, the b6 may be either expressed harmonically as bVI or melodically as a prominent lowered sixth scale degree. The tone is often respelled enharmonically as #5 (especially in the “Oxford”) and frequently occurs within a diatonic

³³ Greenberg, 293.

³⁴ Ibid, 317.

³⁵ Ibid, 318.

³⁶ Ibid, 308.

passage to serve as an astonishing or disruptive digression. Especially frequent in no. 92, there are examples in every movement of the set. The first notable example is in 90/2 where it serves as a delicious deceptive extension in m. 92; the deceptive motion recurs to great effect at m. 114. An even more arresting case is the incredibly tender pianissimo deception at m. 128; this instance, unmistakably prominent, is exploited for every possible ounce of sentimentality and poignancy. Looking earlier in the movement, one notices the bVI sidestep at m. 19, interpreted here as Neapolitan of dominant. This gesture is the seed for the bVI prolongation later in the movement and the motion is noticed again in more dramatic form at m. 34 with Db as prominent melodic tone. In 90/3, b6 is achieved melodically as important resting point (Ab) at m. 19 before moving to dominant, and G# is melodically prominent as most dissonant note of Trio. In the second movement of Symphony no. 91, Gb (b6 of B-flat) is significant, first adumbrated as a passing augmented sixth in m. 7 and later as a more structurally important diversion (m. 17 and m. 111). The prominent passing augmented sixth chord at end of first strain recurs in the Minuet of no. 91. In that symphony's Finale, C-flat is significant as a formal marker, most notably in m. 118 as catalyst for the episode in G-flat major. The flat 6 is exploited so frequently in the Symphony no. 92 that it becomes a recognizable motif. The following table provides a summary:

Use of flat-6 in Symphony no. 92	
Movement	Location
intro	m. 13-20 Protracted augmented-sixth chord. Eb vs. D competing for dominance
1	Occurs throughout the exposition in both enharmonic spellings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • m. 47 D# (b6/V) destabilizes transition section • m. 62 (essential to dominant minor) • m. 69 emphasized melodically at, recalling opening predominant function • m. 113 b6/d- • m. 145 • m. 212 Modulation to b6 most unexpected and delightful disruption
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • m. 40 Bb is crucial to <i>minore</i> harmonic framework • m. 43 Db (b6/F) provides pivot to relative major • m. 108-110 crucial to nostalgic atmosphere of end
3	Flirts with Eb as prominent melodic tone in second strain.
4	Used melodically in other passages and as augmented-sixth predominant sonority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • m. 2-3 Used as chromatic alteration in primary theme • m. prepares the secondary area • m. 114 starts development • from m. 191 Entire preparation for recap hinges on D#: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Haydn is practically stuck on this tone and generates considerable anxiety through its prolongation and repetition • m. 209 very long, unexpected unison passage with raw D#s (prominent b6, enharmonically rendered)

Related in effect to flat 6 is the use of D-flat as a particularly exotic diversion. This key seems to have a special flavor in this set and Haydn frequently relies on it to provide astonishment and titillation. The second movement of no. 90 has already been discussed as an excruciating prolongation of Db as bVI. Of course there is the unforgettable false ending in that symphony's Finale, after which Haydn brings in another recapitulation, *sotto voce*, in the Neapolitan Db (m. 172); because this section is repeated, the audience gets to twice experience the joy of a false ending and the music disconcertingly starting up again up a half-step. The Symphony No. 91 uses Db in a Schubertian sidestep at m. 88 and there is a peculiar tonicization

of Db in the development (m. 157), after which Haydn moves to Gb, making the unprepared return of Eb in m. 176 feel very wrong. Like the Symphony No. 90, the second movement of no. 91 also uses Db as a distant diversion! In the “Oxford” Symphony, C# is crucial melodically to generation of tension in the introduction; it also occurs prominently in the Finale as the first non-diatonic pitch of the opening tune; there it serves to derail melody into frivolity.

Another unifying feature of the three symphonies is harmonic instability. Frequent diversion by unexpected harmonies is one of Papa Haydn’s standard tricks, but certain types of instability, unusual progressions, and sinking into parallel minor are especially striking in this set. Nos. 90 and 92 both begin their expositions off-tonic, no. 92/1 also begins its secondary area off tonic, and no. 90 makes a theme of the vii^{07}/V sonority. The introduction to no. 90 comes to rest on a vii^{04}_3/V before the fermata and both the Allegro assai and primary theme notably begin on the dominant chord, achieving tonic only in its fifth bar. Recalling the introduction, this diminished sonority is deployed unusually commonly as predominant sonority later in the piece: well into closing material, one expects a clear IV—V—I cadence at m. 81, but this is thwarted by vii^{07}/V ; the sonority also recurs humorously in preparation of the recapitulation. The recapitulation begins as one would expect, but veers off-course by a circle of fifths progression instigated in m. 163 by a prominent vii^{07}/V chord. The second movement recalls the sonority as vii^0/V pushes first strain to dominant; the Finale notably prepares the medial caesura and second theme with vii^{07}/V , obviously recalling the first movement’s introduction. This diminished sonority also occurs at m. 22 in the Adagio of the “Oxford” as an extremely dissonant suspension over the tonic.

Because the Symphony no. 91 is so dominated by counterpoint, its harmonic landscape largely results from interactions between voices. Although this is the most consonant of the

trilogy, one passage of utter harmonic chaos occurs in its first movement at m. 74-81: Example 1 illustrates hemiola and rhythmic confusion supporting intensely unstable chromaticism.



Example 1: Symphony No. 91, m. 74-79, violin 1

“If the predominant feature of Symphony no. 91 is a contrapuntal fabric, that of Symphony no. 92, Oxford, is dissonant tension.”³⁷ Indeed, the intense harmonic tension at the end of the introduction is created by opposition between the augmented sixth and dominant sonorities, yearning dissonance between melody and harmony (m. 14, 16, 19), and emphasis on unstable melodic intervals of tritone and diminished seventh. This dissonance is not resolved and we see Haydn manipulating it as yet another unifying device throughout the Allegro. A great deal of dissonance is expressed melodically within the prolonged chromatic descent D, C#, C: at the introduction’s beginning, D is seen moving to C, but is ultimately detained to C#. Webster argues that C#’s improper resolution to C (instead of D) is a critical gesture³⁸ and it occurs at crucial formal junctures: the transition into Allegro, recapitulation of second theme (m. 165), transition into coda (m. 204). “Unresolved chromatic tension at the transition casts a shadow on the whole movement”³⁹ and another dissonant harmonic feature of the symphony’s first movement is an emphasis on the tritone. The interval is emphasized immediately before the Allegro and is built into the primary theme, recurring throughout the movement. The sense of dissonant tension continues, infusing the “Oxford’s” Adagio, the Minuet, and the Finale.

³⁷ Greenberg, 310.

³⁸ Webster, 169.

³⁹ Greenberg, 311.

Striking and unusual progressions are in every movement of the three symphonies. One particularly mysterious passage occurs in no. 90's second movement at end of minor theme's second strain, shown below.

Example 2: Harmonic reduction of Symphony No. 90, second movement m. 32-38

This unsettling progression is extrapolated later in the movement. The symphony's Minuet features a striking tonal plan: I – V||i-bVI-V- bIII-V-I||. Deception recurs here as a theme, moving here unexpectedly to the parallel minor, bVI, and the plush bIII. In the symphony's Finale, an already exciting passage is further enhanced by an extraordinary chord progression, shown in example 3.

Example 3: Harmonic reduction of Symphony No. 90, Finale m. 211-215

Extremely thrilling in context, these unprepared and unresolved dissonances are more characteristic of Berlioz than Haydn. The second movement of no. 91 employs an unusual tonal scheme for a rounded binary form, with the first strain ending on I:

I V I || V bIII IV V⁷ I ||

The unprepared sinking into parallel minor, “Lights out,” has commonly been observed in Haydn’s symphonies. The phenomenon is prominent in each member of this set. In its development, the Finale of no. 90 sinks without preparation (m. 79) to the parallel minor (here G to g-), as did the first movement’s development, the second movement’s 2nd theme, and the Minuet’s second strain! The *minore* passage in the slow movement of no. 91 is an example from that symphony, and the gesture occurs twice in the “Oxford.” In the “Oxford’s” first movement, the secondary area should be stably in the dominant, but Haydn defeats stability by immediately moving to the dominant minor (m. 61) before ultimately allowing it to cadence in the dominant major. In the Minuet of the “Oxford,” the very long and unusual second strain moves suddenly to the tonic minor, creating a dark suspense.

Another harmonic feature of the set is Haydn’s exploring of affective implications of key. Like many other C major works, no. 90 is a thoroughly festive work with trumpets and drums. Even at its most troubled or exuberant, the E-flat symphony no. 91 remains a richly lyrical and warm work: in this key, strings lose the hard brilliance of their open strings and the winds assume an extra rich sonority. Haydn chose a mellow key for the symphony and seems to have exploited it as a theme throughout. In his study of Bach’s *Well Tempered Clavier*, Riemann judged the key of G major to be “brisk as bees. Troubled joy, of lively enjoyment.”⁴⁰ It would be difficult to find a more appropriate description for the emotional affect of the “Oxford.”

⁴⁰ Hugo Riemann, *Analysis of J.S. Bach’s Wohltemperiertes Clavier Vol .I*, tran. J.S. Schedlock (New York; G. Schirmer, 1893), 94.

Landon discusses a certain melancholy that creeps into Haydn's music of this period, especially the slow movements: "a strong sense of autumnal beauty, of slanted rays of the sun,"⁴¹ and "melancholy, not the anguished desperation of a Mozart but (if the simile be permitted) like an early autumn mist that tells us that summer is over."⁴² Not present in the slow movement of the trill-manic no. 91, this phenomenon is sensed strongly in the slow movements of nos. 90 and 92. It is mostly produced by harmonic means and in the former, Haydn achieves this feeling by long pedal points, sentimental repetition of motives, poignant wind solos, reliance on vii^{o7}/V, gently deceptive motion to bVI and its prolongation. The nostalgic melancholy is also noticed in the Adagio of the "Oxford" during which Haydn again employs long pedal points, sentimental repetition of motives, poignant wind solos, flattened six, and harmonic prolongation. After the bitter *minore* passage, the return of major at m. 72 is a gorgeous relief. At first, this is just a rescored reprise of the opening material, but soon develops and rhapsodizes, becoming quite sentimental; heartbreak, much more intense than in no. 90, is heightened by Haydn's motion to subdominant (either major or minor, but a favorite device of Brahms) and use of flat seventh. In this remarkable passage, Haydn hints resolves the materials from the interior minor section and subsumes them by harmonic means.

Finally, there are certain uncanny harmonic features which unify the Minuets of the set. All stay in tonic for Trio (this was common practice by now, and so do 88, 89, 93, 94, but not 95) but two daringly explore foreign keys: the second strain of no. 90 moves unexpectedly to E-flat, and the second strain of no. 92 very mysteriously moves to the parallel minor. The Minuet of No.

⁴¹ Landon, *Chronicle*, 607.

⁴² *Ibid*, 658.

91 is harmonically conservative. Interestingly, Haydn prepares the final cadence of each Minuet with the same very characteristic harmonic sidestep: I I⁷ IV before resolving cadV to I.

The image shows a harmonic reduction of a musical passage in 3/4 time. The treble clef staff contains chords and a melodic line. The bass clef staff contains a simple bass line. The harmonic progression is labeled as I, I⁷, IV, cad6/4, and I.

Example 4: Symphony No. 90, Minuet m. 52-56, harmonic reduction

The gesture, also memorably pronounced in Mozart’s earlier Linz symphony of 1783, occurs in the Minuet of no. 91 at m. 34 and in the “Oxford’s” Minuet at m. 39. Thus, reliance on the flat 6, Db as exotic diversion, general instability, dissonance, striking or unusual progressions, and exploiting inherent colors of tonal centers strongly imparts a sense of harmonic unity to the symphonies 90-92.

Form

Haydn’s set of symphonies 90-92 displays interesting formal features regarding the approach to sonata forms, slow movements, and Minuets; indeed Schroeder notes that the dramatic capacity of sonata took began to take “on new and striking features in the late symphonies written for Paris and England.”⁴³ As one may expect, each of the fast movements is a sonata and most feature significant reimagining in the second rotation. The expositions of sonata forms in this set all follow the customary primary-transition-secondary-closing idiom and Haydn, the creative mind, is observed giving each exposition unique and special features. Transitions always begin

⁴³ David Schroeder, “Orchestral Music: Symphonies and Concertos” in *The Haydn Companion*, ed. Caryl Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 99.

to develop material before veering off-course and leading to a clear medial caesura. The transition of 90/1 is remarkably short, only nine measures (mm. 41-49); the transition of 91/1 is really a new theme (m. 36) functioning as transition. In no. 92/1, the transition begins (m. 41) as the primary theme repeated, veering off-course by jarring applied dominants in m. 47 and m. 49. The Finale of the “Oxford” has an extremely long transition passage, filled with filigree and harmonic intrigue, which dominates the exposition and lends a continuous feel to the rotation; this is the only movement of the set displaying continuous characteristics. The transitions of 90/4 and 91/4 feature odd harmonic details: the transition of 90/4 leads, very oddly, to a medial caesura harmonized by vii^{o7}/V (which makes sense in a harmonic framework using the diminished seventh chords as a unifying device) and caesura fill; 91/4 has a deformed medial caesura which does not achieve a perfect authentic cadence, shown in example 5.

The musical score for Example 5 shows a transition section (measures 39-41) leading into the second theme (measures 42-44). The transition section is characterized by active, transitional figuration in both hands. The second theme begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a more stable harmonic structure. The score is labeled with "...transition" and "Second theme".

Example 5: Symphony 91, movement 4, m. 39-42 reduction

In example 5 one notices the elision of active, transitional figuration directly into the secondary area and lack of perfect authentic cadence.

With respect to the secondary areas, one notes several clear unifying trends of the set: the secondary areas are sometimes stable but always lead to clear EEC prepared by a flourish. Even when the thematic material of the secondary area is the same as the first, Haydn always makes the secondary area at least slightly contrasting. The secondary areas of 90/4, 91/1, 91/4, and 92/1

are clearly primary-based. In that of 92/4, the melodic material is new, but a tick-tock accompaniment makes it sound like a closing theme and undermines contrast to the primary area. Of the set, only 90/1 contains a clearly contrasting secondary theme; in that case the arpeggiated melodic contour and obviously different harmony and scoring lend a stability not found elsewhere in the set. Another trick observed infrequently in works outside the set but commonly within this set is Haydn's layering of a new theme above the primary tune to form a secondary group: the new theme, usually given to the first violin, provides the necessary contrast to the secondary area while, the second violins play the primary tune. This is done in 90/4, 91/1, 91/4, and 92/1. Example 6 illustrates this phenomenon at the medial caesura and opening of the second theme of the first movement of the "Oxford."

Example 6: "Oxford" symphony, movement 1, m. 55-60

In the example given above, the primary theme is observed played by the violins under the oboes, who are playing a new, somewhat contrasting figure. This particular example is also notable for the dissolving nature of the secondary theme: it is very short (only four measures) and immediately sinks into the parallel minor and cadential figuration.

The closing sections of the set may be either perfunctory or extended. Those of 90/4, 92/1, 92/4 are brief. Those of 90/1, 91/1, 91/4 are long and musically substantial, and in them Haydn employs chromaticism, foreign and unexpected keys, and general instability to build tension all the way to the end of the first rotation. Going to so far even introducing new themes

in the closing of 91/1, Brown notes that that this exposition becomes “developmental in the passage where it would be least expected.”⁴⁴ Alternately, the closing passage of 92/1 is the only stable section of the exposition; homophonic and periodic, Haydn uses this closing as a moment of repose during an otherwise unstable and volatile exposition. The exposition of 92/4, earlier identified as the only displaying characteristics of a continuous form, achieves its EEC extremely late, in the final nine measures of the exposition. Whether stable or unstable, extended or short, Haydn ends every first rotation with an affirming, clear cadence.

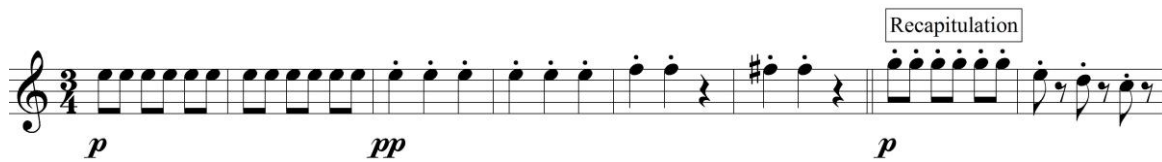
As one would expect, Haydn uses the developments to rework materials presented earlier in the piece. Every member of the set employs motivic fragmentation, rests, counterpoint, and modulations to distant keys. In all but 91/1, Haydn begins this passage with a harmonic shock: 90/4 and 92/4 slide immediately to the parallel minor, 90/1 begins with a dissonant suspension, and 92/1 moves abrasively from D to the B locrian figure. Developments are also occasion for use of extremely complicated and ornate counterpoint, and it is particularly complicated in the “Oxford.” In it, Haydn employs “an astounding set of contrapuntal manipulations using inversion, stretto, recombination, and rhythmic displacement.”⁴⁵ There is a flowering of particularly dense counterpoint in the Finale to the “Oxford:” of it, Landon notes that Haydn’s development reveals the “enormous contrapuntal possibilities of the first subject... The first subject with the grace-note figure of the second, the first subject in cancrizans with itself, in inversion with itself, as a canon in several parts. It is the great contrapuntal tradition of Flanders, Italy, Saxony and Vienna.”⁴⁶ The first movement of no. 91 is a rare example of Haydn

⁴⁴ Brown, 237.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 240.

⁴⁶ Landon, *Chronicle*, 633.

introducing a new theme in the development section (m. 128), though its emphasis on the rising fourth relates directly to the introduction. Two movements also contain a characteristic preparation of the recapitulation by coy augmentation of the primary theme in violins and a gently chromatic ascent.



Example 7: Symphony no. 90, movement 1, m. 147-154. First violin

A similar gesture prepares the recapitulation to the first movement of Symphony no. 91.

The recapitulations to allegro movements of the set are almost always unusual with significant reworking of materials; only the Finale to no. 91 adheres to the formal outlines of its exposition. One notes in sonata-form movements of this set that the sections are often of very unequal length: in 90/4 the exposition is 78 measures, the development 63, and recapitulation 98. This phenomenon is particularly exaggerated in the “Oxford” symphony: in its first movement, the exposition is 62 measures, the development only 41, and the recap 108. Webster notes that the “Oxford” has the shortest development (20%) of any of Haydn’s fast first movements except the op. 54 No 2 quartet.⁴⁷ Indeed, the distinction between development and recapitulation becomes very hard to make in this set as the developments grow short and recapitulations very developmental. As he is rethinking the relationship between development and recapitulation, Haydn seems to be destroying the Classical idea of symmetry in these works. Brown notes that since the early and middle works, Haydn is clearly rethinking the recapitulation,⁴⁸ and we will

⁴⁷ Webster, 313.

⁴⁸ Brown, 236.

examine unusual ways in which Haydn derails the recapitulation. The Finale of the Symphony no. 90 is extremely developmental in the recapitulation. Apart from the tonal procedures, the recapitulation cannot easily be separated from the development because, as in the first movement, Haydn is using rotational cycles of themes. Brown identifies five such rotations after the repeat sign; each employs primary and closing material; as in the first movement, closing material is given great prominence.⁴⁹ The table below illustrates Haydn's use of primary material (P), a closing fanfare (1K), and closing sixteenth runs (2K).

Measure	Rotation	Material	Key
119	1	P	ii
124		1K	VI
126		2K	VI
142	2	P	I
164		1K	I
172	3	P+1K	bII
196	4	S(P), 1K	I
216		2K, 1K	I
232	5	P/1K	IV, I

Symphony no. 90, movement 4, development and recapitulation⁵⁰

The shaded area indicates the area which would normally be considered the development, and one can see how Haydn continues extensive development in recapitulation the after such conflicts are supposed to be resolved. Indeed, as Schroeder notes, recapitulations do not simply settle materials in tonic: "Haydn treats recapitulations as places for dramatic issues to be resolved through an intelligible process."⁵¹ Indeed, as every different reprise of the material differs in scoring and effect, the recapitulation may be seen as a whole series of recompositions. This

⁴⁹ Brown, 236.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Schroeder, 99.

derailment of traditional thematic cycles is especially noticeable in the “Oxford.” Brown notes that “this sort of development and recapitulation that become part of a single gesture is most fully realized in the first movement of Symphony no. 92.”⁵² This work’s development has been shown to be very short and the recapitulation very long, and in the recapitulation we see three clear rotations of P1 (opening), P2 (main theme), and closing material, as illustrated in table _.

Measure	Rotation	Material	Key
125	1	P1	V7
129		P2	I
159		K	Unstable
166	2	P1	V7
180		P2 ^{alt}	I
191		K	I
205	3	S (P1)	V
212		S2 (P2)	bVI
225		K	I

Second rotation of Symphony No. 92, movement 1

Because the exposition and development are so much shorter than the recapitulation and because each recapitulatory rotation contains the complete thematic material of the monothematic exposition, Brown wonders whether the listener hears the movement as a five-part form: exposition, development, recap 1, recap 2, and recap 3.⁵³ Thus Haydn builds a fair amount of formal ambiguity through continued development in the recapitulation into both the Finale to no. 90 and the first movement of no. 92. This innovative approach is also seen in the first movement to the symphony no. 91. Brown notes that if the recapitulation of 90/4 becomes more of a development, then the exposition to 91/1 becomes “developmental in the passage where it would be least expected; i.e. between S (m. 82) and K (m. 115)” as the secondary theme wanders

⁵² Brown, 236.

⁵³ Ibid, 241.

harmonically a great deal before finding the dominant in the last five measures.⁵⁴ This movement also includes a very special coda (m. 253) at which Haydn combines materials in a supreme act of 5-part counterpoint. Brown views this moment as crucial to Haydn's development: "That the coda becomes a true intellectual, if not emotional, climax of everything that has come before lends to this movement a certain historical importance in Haydn's output; in some of the first and last movements of the 'London' symphonies composed in the 1790s, Haydn realizes that an ending can become something more than a satisfactory structural closure."⁵⁵

False recaps and audience manipulation are classic Haydn tricks, but of the set, there are only two instances of such wicked tactics, both in Finales. Formally, in this set Haydn seems to be distracted by other tricks, namely blending the development and recapitulation, and in the Finale of the "Oxford," the effect when the trumpets quietly enter without horns (m. 178) at the false recap in C major seems to be less about deception and more about the trumpets' extraordinary color. The most prominent formal trick of the set is of course the fake ending in the Finale of no. 90. While the false recap is commonplace, the false ending is quite extraordinary, and the effect occurs twice when one takes the repeat; this is a special instance of a composer writing audience reaction directly into the piece, even giving rests for laughs or applause. It is certainly unique that in this moment Haydn includes audience reaction as an essential ingredient of the music. Landon notes that after the rests, the music begins again, up a half-step like a pop tune, as a joke perhaps more ironic than witty.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Brown, 237.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Landon, *Chronicle*, 632.

Of the three slow movements in the set, two are variations and one is a ternary-form Adagio. All three use a *minore* section in the parallel minor as a foil to the primary, major-key material and end with primary material. Of course, the variations form, especially the double variations is clearly associated with Haydn. Koch noted that Haydn was the first composer to write variations in slow movements of his symphonies⁵⁷ and the themes to all three slow movements are in rounded binary form, as are their *minore* passages. This phrasing scheme is mostly clear and consistent in nos. 90 and 91 but deliberately obscured in no. 92; there, rounded binary phrasing, repeats, and cadences are very cleverly disguised to give impression of unending phrase as we hear the beginning of phrases but are totally unaware how they relate. The slow movement of no. 90 is a double variations and the two themes of no. 90 are melodically related, making the second seem like a reaction to the first.⁵⁸ The first variation writes out the repeats and Haydn very cleverly elides the strains. While the second areas of both no. 90 and no. 92 are especially raw emotionally for slow movements, the three slow movements of the set are each highly unique in character. No. 90 contrasts a pleasant tune with stormy and volatile materials. Its *minore* area exploits rests, metric displacement, and diminished harmonies, resulting in is an unusually extended, tortured, and harmonically disoriented passage. Brown notes that the variations of Symphony No. 91 is similar in spirit and style to the slow movement of 90, “except that in 91, Haydn uses a gavotte rather than a dance with a single pickup.”⁵⁹ Cast as theme and four variations with a dancing, folksy spirit and raucous coda, this work is the most optimistic and extroverted of the set. The slow movement to the “Oxford” is a serene and

⁵⁷ Elaine R. Sisman, “Tradition and Transformation in the Alternating Variations of Haydn and Beethoven,” *Acta Musicologica* 62, Fasc. 2/3 (May - Dec., 1990): 155.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 161.

⁵⁹ Brown, 238.

nostalgic Adagio. Haydn's slow movements of the set are notable for their dynamic form. Always adding filigree and subtle new harmonies in repetitions, other alterations give movements a sense of forward motion. The coda of no. 90 features prominently independent woodwind lines and an excruciating prolongation of scale degree 5 and b6. Throughout the variations, one recognizes recurrence of the strophe's opening motif, but Haydn allows significant fluidity of phrasing and ambiguity as to where the strophe ends. Indeed, "Haydn makes every effort to destroy regularity without demolishing the underlying shape."⁶⁰ In the second movement of no. 91, Haydn allows trills to totally take over, transforming the work from folksy dance into riotous caricature. There is an especially fluid form to the Adagio of the "Oxford:" the reprise includes phrase extensions, reharmonizations, new countermelodies, silences, and extended digressions from soloists. Brown notes that this passage, always in a state of change, "variation occurs at every level of the structure, and in every way it is embellished—from what some might call developing variation to simple changes in orchestration."⁶¹ All of those elements combine with the harmonic features discussed above to make this a very special movement. Landon considers this work a "tribute to all that was gracious and beautiful in pre-revolutionary Europe."⁶²

The Minuets of this set all are notable for their very long and unusual second strains which show Haydn incorporating aspects of sonata rhetoric. The second strain of no. 90, containing 44 of the Minuet's 58 measures, is expansive. It begins very mysteriously with daring harmonic exploits before a clear reprise of the first strain. Of no. 91, Landon notes the "beautiful

⁶⁰ Brown, 235.

⁶¹ Ibid, 214.

⁶² Landon, *Chronicle*, 633.

lead-back to the return of the ‘A’ of the Minuet’s 2nd strain: long dominant pedal with delicate bassoon coloring.”⁶³ Unlike the trios of no. 90 and 92, that of no. 91 is highly Ländler-inspired. The Minuet of no. 92 is notable for its long and unusual second strain with large “developmental” passage and frequent, grave detours to minor; of their shock and effect, Landon comments that “the heart jumps, but not for joy.”⁶⁴ Indeed, this movement takes the syncopated *forzato* figures from the Minuet of no. 91 and extends the movement into something far more serious and complex.

To summarize, the set of symphonies nos. 90-92 are unified by a number of formal features. There is a continued reevaluation of functional elements of the sonata form exposition; every ingredient seems to be reconsidered and could either be stable, or unstable and developing. Even the closing section of the exposition, almost always flurry of cadential figures, may be reimagined as an oasis of stability. Developments in this set are typically contrapuntal and turbulent, but often shorter than expected. The formal structure of the recapitulation could be clearly delineated and traditional, mildly altered, or utterly transformed, as in 90/4. Rounded binary structures, clearly seen as foundational elements to every second and third movements, are summarized in the following table.

Rounded binary structures within inner movements of symphonies no. 90-92	
90/2	Yes, both themes.
90/3	Clearly in both Minuet and Trio
91/2	More subtle here, but refers back.
91/3	Clearly in both Minuet and Trio
92/2	Very cleverly disguised binary form, but makes reference back to opening figure.
92/3	Clearly in both Minuet and Trio

⁶³ Landon, *Chronicle*, 633.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 634.

These extended rounded binary-form movements lend a sonata rhetoric to the inner movements of this set that corresponds to their substantial emotional gravity. Finally, Landon notes that Haydn frequently closes movements with three chords separated from the rest⁶⁵; this gesture is present in the first and last movements of the “Oxford” as well as the second movement of no. 91.

Melody

Common themes relating to aspects of melody in the symphonies no. 90-92 involve monothematic treatment, virtuosity as formal marker, unusual phrasing, use of counterpoint, and thematic connections between movements. Typical of the composer’s style throughout his entire life, this set of symphonies is not a cornucopia of melody; rather, the works tend to focus on developing a restricted number of themes. Of the six allegro movements being considered, only 90/1 features a secondary theme that is stable and contrasting; all the rest are monothematic. The Finale of no. 92 does present a fresh secondary theme, but any contrast provided by the dominant or new melodic material is significantly undermined by reuse of a jumpy character and the tick-tock accompaniment, both of which directly recall the primary area. Another common trick in the secondary area is to have a P-based S and simply add new countermelody atop the primary theme, a phenomenon which was already discussed and illustrated in example 6. The symphony No. 90 is especially economically constructed: in each of its movements, the primary or closing themes are almost constantly present. In its first movement, the primary theme, beginning on dominant harmony, naturally and frequently leads to cadence; thus, Brown suggests that the primary subjects of the movement are the repeated notes and closure. Because repeated notes

⁶⁵ Landon, *Chronicle*, 607.

signal an impending cadence, Haydn uses the figure as a “Pavlovian bell” to manipulate the listener’s expectation over longer spans, especially in the end of the exposition and the development.⁶⁶ Thus, the movement’s monothematicism provides contrast and interest for the entire movement.

Except when Haydn is deliberately obscuring form (as was examined above), formal markers are clear and in sonata-form movements virtuosity is often an element that marks clear structural cadences. While virtuosic writing is employed for a many effects, in this set Haydn commonly builds a flurry of sixteenth notes into medial caesura or essential expositional cadence. The following table provides a summary:

Virtuosity as structural marker		
Movement	Measure	Event
90/1	74	marks closing material
90/4	38-50	prepares MC
91/1	74-81	ferocious chaos prepares EEC
	113	Schubertian flitting triplets signal end of exposition
91/4	37-40	secondary area in elision with the MC
	49-52	EEC
92/1	51-55	MC
	66-70	EEC
92/4	60-77	very long passage builds to MC and secondary area

Strange phrasing is another common element to this set. Interruption of the primary theme of fast movements within 8+7ⁱ scheme becomes a trademark of the playful composer. Indeed, in this set its use becomes something of a habit and is immediately present in every fast movement except 92/1, as the following table demonstrates.

⁶⁶ Brown, 233.

Movement	Interrupted phrasing of primary theme
90/1	$4+8+3^i$
90/4	$8+7^i$
91/1	$8+7^i$
91/4	$8+7^i$
92/1	Not present in primary theme Idea appears in closing (m. 72) as $4+3^i$
92/4	$16^{(8+8)}+15^{i(8+7i)}$

Notably, the primary theme of the “Oxford’s” first movement does not get interrupted, as Haydn actually allows a normal consequent phrase; instead, the figure appears in the closing to disrupt the only stable passage of a very tumultuous exposition. There are other instances of strange and unsettling phrasing. While the Trio to no. 90 is constructed of eight measure units, there is a very strange division among them: the first strain should probably be $2 \times 2+4$, but the first measure seems like an anacrusis because the accompaniment does not enter until the second measure. This case is quite disturbing and disorients the listener. The opening to the “Oxford” is another example of ambiguous phrasing from what appears to be regular phrasing. Its introduction is comprised of four groups of four measures, each time occurring in different groupings: $(1+3)$; $1+1+2$; $2+2$; $1+1+1+1$. And as the accompaniment only entered in the second measure of the Trio of no. 90, the introduction to the “Oxford” also begins with an upbeat feeling.

Haydn’s use of counterpoint in this set must be discussed as he is clearly experimenting with learned vs. accessible style. While counterpoint is mostly restricted to a developmental procedure in Symphonies no. 90 and 92, works that otherwise tend toward homophonic texture, counterpoint is developed as an intrinsic element of no. 91 which is highly contrapuntal treatment throughout. Essential to this symphony, it is built into the introduction and primary theme, both of which are composed in invertible counterpoint and are easily manipulated. The symphony is the most frequently contrapuntal of the set and there is almost constant elaboration by counterpoint. In the first movement, Brown indicates the following procedures:

Exposition: two-part counterpoint; counterpoint inverted; new countersubject added; subject in bass, pedal above.

Development: another new countersubject used; further contrapuntal elaboration

Recapitulation: subject with new countersubject; new chromatic countersubject

Coda: combination of material.”⁶⁷

The sheer number of devices alone indicates the emphasis on counterpoint in this work, and Haydn reaches an apex of his craft in the coda’s magnificent combination of themes. Like Mozart in his “Jupiter” symphony, Haydn achieves the supreme contrapuntal feat of combining all themes simultaneously in a five-voiced display⁶⁸ beginning at measure 253. Unlike Mozart’s “Jupiter” and Haydn’s other works from this set, Brown notes that the no. 91 is “not flashy in any sense because of the mellower timbre of its key, E-flat, but at the same time it is an intellectual tour de force that requires more than just listening to its surface aspects.”⁶⁹

Counterpoint, while more restricted than in Symphony no. 91, plays a significant aesthetic role in the “Oxford.” Brown notes that, “contrasting to 90 and 91, 92 plays both cards simultaneously; it has both surface appeal and intellectual depth. Some might even regard it as Haydn’s most completely satisfying symphony.”⁷⁰ Indeed, it seems to be the perfect balance of learned and immediately pleasing elements, possibly setting the stage for later works. Landon writes that Haydn was right to pick this work for the concert celebrating his doctorate as it “presents the greatest contrapuntal mind since Bach, embedded within the popular Classical style, which with this work achieved a peak of matchless perfection.”⁷¹ Thus, with the “Oxford” situated between the highly contrapuntal Symphony no. 91 and the more accessible London

⁶⁷ Brown, 237.

⁶⁸ Landon, *Chronicle*, 632.

⁶⁹ Brown, 239.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Landon, *Chronicle*, 635.

works, Haydn is seems to be experimenting with how much counterpoint is appropriate and how to treat themes in a way that help him relate to the less-experienced listener; this trend continues to play out in the composer's set that followed.

A most striking melodic characteristic of the set is thematic connections between movements as all three symphonies make explicit thematic references between their movements. Brown notes that this relationship “occurs often enough in these works to be regarded as more than coincidental.”⁷² References, which may be overt and obvious, or subtle, are summarized in the following chart.

Thematic connections between movements in Symphonies no. 90-92		
Instance	Reference	Means
90/3 Minuet	90/1/37	Recalls the closing material
90/3 Trio	90 Minuet	4-note and 2-note themes; emphasis on the chromatic tones F# and G#
91/Minuet	91/1	Chromaticism; 2-note slurs; 3-note slurs; air of unabashed vigor; brilliant triplets that build a flurry into cadence
91/Minuet	91/intro	stepwise third
91/Minuet/20	91/1	diverging counterpoint
91/4/26	91/1 P theme	Bb-A-Ab-G
91/4/18-26	91/1 P theme ^{inv}	Similar chromatic reference in slow motion in Vi 1: C-Db-D-Eb
92/3 Minuet	92/1/72 Closing	Turn figure
92/3 Trio	92/Minuet	6 eighth notes
92/3 Trio	91/Trio	Off-beat interruptions in horns and bassoons

A most extraordinary melodic aspect of the set at hand is thematic relations in the Minuets: all three Minuets refer directly to their first movement! In fact, the highly unusual Minuets of this set have several very special relations. Both the symphonies no. 90 and 91 evoke

⁷² Brown, 236.

the French monarchy. Pompous and flashy, the broad Minuet of no. 90 enters “Louis XVI’s artificial, brilliant and extravagant court, flourishing while France lay in the grip of starvation.”⁷³

The symphony no. 91 makes a similar evocation: “With extensive use of rolling triplets and slides and with a rather old-fashioned and slightly slow *Un poco Allegretto* tempo, Haydn’s Minuet seems to be aiming again at the tastes of the ancient regime.”⁷⁴ This may or may not recall that symphony’s French-styled second movement, which degenerated into a “sarcastic parody within the coda as trills” take over.⁷⁵ While 90 and 91 share an implication of French monarchy, the Trios of symphonies no. 91 and 92 share ridiculous offbeat *fz* interruptions. Example 8 shows the first instance in which the “horns momentarily lose their place in the measure at the beginning of the second strain in this unusually disciplined village band.”⁷⁶

Example 8: Symphony no. 91, m. 51-54

⁷³ Landon, *Chronicle* 632.

⁷⁴ Brown, 238.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

The horns rudely disrupt things over a distinctly Ländler-style accompaniment, and this idea returns quite obviously in the “Oxford” symphony.

The image shows a single staff of music for a Horn in 3/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music consists of a sequence of chords: a quarter rest, a quarter rest, a dotted quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, and a quarter rest. Below the staff, there are three *fz* markings with wedge-shaped accents pointing to the first, second, and third chords.

Example 9: Symphony no. 92, Minuet, m. 51

Appearing in the “Oxford” first as a short sequence of *forzatos* in the horns and bassoons, the figure soon becomes wildly uncontrollable. Example 10 illustrates its insistent pollination into other voices.

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is for Violins in 3/4 time, and the bottom staff is for Viola/Cello/Bass in 3/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The Violin staff starts with a quarter rest, followed by a dotted quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, and a quarter note chord. The Viola/Cello/Bass staff starts with a dotted quarter note chord, followed by a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, a quarter note chord, and a quarter note chord. Below the bottom staff, there are four *fz* markings with wedge-shaped accents pointing to the first, second, third, and fourth chords.

Example 10: Symphony no. 92, Minuet, m. 67-70

Brown notes that “when we reach the Trio, it is as if the misplaced horn and oboe entrances in Symphony no. 91 have taken on a life of their own, as they occupy almost the entire Trio... A wry twist in the Minuet of the previous symphony becomes an extended metrical joke here.”⁷⁷

In conclusion, we have examined aspects of orchestration, introductions, harmony, form, and melody that indicate clear relationships between the symphonies nos. 90, 91, and 92. Some connections are subtle and understated; others are unmistakably blatant and intentional. Each

⁷⁷ Brown, 242.

symphony is a highly unique work unto its own, but the depth of relationships among the works is notable. It is unclear whether Haydn intended the trilogy as a “set.” Unlike the composer’s symphonies no. 6 “Le matin,” no. 7 “Le midi,” and no. 8 “Le soir” whose programmatic titles indicate obvious programmatic associations which relate the three works, there are no concrete reasons to believe that Haydn considered nos. 90-92 together. On the other hand, the three were composed almost simultaneously to satisfy the same request from patrons and share undeniable musical affinities. What is clear is that, in composing this set, Haydn continued to innovate and refine his craft while he prepared to travel to England and confront that island’s foreign musical landscape. The “Oxford,” with which Haydn had reached the zenith of his powers, was a clear choice for his London debut and was “a spectacular success for everyone concerned.”⁷⁸

Composing in London, Haydn continued to invent but adopted many characteristics present in the set nos. 90-92. The “Oxford” was particularly influential, with its slow introduction that moves to minor and adumbrates the shape of first theme,⁷⁹ and its Adagio “with forceful trumpets and timpani, encouraged Haydn to compose the similarly characterized largo of 93.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Landon and Wyn, *Haydn: His Life and Music*, 234.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 254.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 256.

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