

## Canadian University Music Review Revue de musique des universités canadiennes

David P. Schroeder. *Haydn and the Enlightenment: the Late Symphonies and their Audience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. vii, 219 pp. ISBN 0-19-816159

Kenneth DeLong

Volume 11, Number 1, 1991

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1014835ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1014835ar>

[See table of contents](#)

### Publisher(s)

Canadian University Music Society / Société de musique des universités canadiennes

### ISSN

0710-0353 (print)

2291-2436 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

### Cite this review

DeLong, K. (1991). Review of [David P. Schroeder. *Haydn and the Enlightenment: the Late Symphonies and their Audience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. vii, 219 pp. ISBN 0-19-816159]. *Canadian University Music Review / Revue de musique des universités canadiennes*, 11(1), 131–133. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1014835ar>

peak in 'low-downness' has been achieved." The tale told in Gayle Young's book is a generally positive one, but there is a lingering melancholy for what the reader cannot help imagining might have been that makes this echoing of *Le Caine's* title not at all inappropriate.

David Keane

## REFERENCES

DAVIES, Hugh.

1984: "Electronic Instruments," *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, ed. S. Sadie. New York: Grove Dictionaries of Music.

JWD Music.

1985: *Hugh Le Caine: Pioneer in Electronic Music Instrument Design; Compositions and Demonstrations, 1948-1972*. Grimsby, Ont.: JWD Music/Hugh Le Caine Project. [Available from JWD Music, 146 Ridge Road West, Grimsby, Ontario, L3M 4E7.]

DAVID P. SCHROEDER. *Haydn and the Enlightenment: the Late Symphonies and their Audience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. vii, 219 pp. ISBN 0-19-816159

Despite some recent attempts to extend the scope of traditional musicology, most books on Classic period music continue to follow the familiar "positivist" line and approach the relatively uncharted waters of cultural and social history gingerly and with undisguised caution. The reasons for this are not difficult to find: the very language and terms still customarily used to discuss such fundamental musical issues as form, thematic development, and harmonic analysis were developed initially in conjunction with efforts to describe the morphology of Classic period music; and the mental patterns this has established, it seems, have tended to discourage forays beyond the prevailing boundaries of positivist historical and analytical discourse.

In this sense, David Schroeder's book pursues a new tack. Starting with a broad, all-encompassing premise, Schroeder attempts to marry the language and concerns of social and intellectual history with those of stylistic and formal analysis — in effect, to explain the *Zeitgeist* of the Enlightenment in musical terms. Whereas most studies that focus on intellectual and social history tend to treat the actual music from a distance and to discuss individual works only in the most general terms, Schroeder tries valiantly to merge these two fundamentally antithetical casts of mind. Using the language of a "close reading" of individual scores — analysis, in other words — Schroeder argues points that lie ultimately in the realm of intellectual history and reception history. Since such attempts are rare (in music at least), and since there is no established tradition of what constitutes satisfactory proof, the success or failure of Schroeder's thesis depends very much upon the intellectual predilections of the individual reader and upon whether that reader can be persuaded by the nature of the arguments. Can, for example, the character and development of a given theme, or even the structural properties of an entire movement or work, serve as evidence concerning Haydn's mental outlook and his effort to improve "public morality"? Or, to

put it differently, does the presence of duo-thematicism in the later symphonies constitute musical evidence of Haydn's embracing of Enlightenment intellectual and moral values and as a musical metaphor for the "toleration of opposing views"? It is the fundamental premise of the book to argue such case, and to do so is at the very least a challenging task.

The book is divided into three parts. The first addresses the matter of Haydn's relationship to Enlightenment thought and is largely an exercise in the history of ideas. Using Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1727) as a starting point, Schroeder reviews the major figures of the Enlightenment with whom Haydn is known to have had contact, either in person or through literature. An extension of a topic also treated in Herman Zeman's *Haydn und die Literature seiner Zeit* (1976), this section also tries to lay to rest the long-standing notion, first put forward by Carpini in 1812, that Haydn was essentially "an illustration idiot" and to assert Haydn as a man who was intellectually aware and in support of the Enlightenment values of his age. To the point, Schroeder stresses Haydn's relationship to Gellert, to Freemasonry, and to the numerous people of intellectual standing with whom Haydn is known to have associated in Austria and England. Tantalizing (and probably at least partially true) as this revisionist idea of Haydn is, it is hampered by the absence of much direct evidence, for Haydn was conspicuously laconic in his aesthetic and intellectual pronouncements. Much must be (and is) inferred from the somewhat sketchy evidence that does exist. Thoroughly researched and engagingly written, this portion of the book nevertheless serves as a useful review of Enlightenment thought, especially regarding the relationship between the arts and morals, and is well worth reading for the information it contains and synthesizes.

Central to Schroeder's main point, however, is the evidence contained in the music itself, and in this regard the String Quartets Op. 33 and the Symphony No. 83 are cited as important landmarks on the road to Haydn's attempts to convey Enlightenment ideals in purely musical terms. The following discussion of the closing portion of the first movement of Symphony No. 83 demonstrates how Schroeder argues the relationship between Haydn's use of duo-thematicism and Enlightenment ideals:

The conclusion of the movement (bars 182-7) presents a solution, but within that solution the forces which generated the initial conflict are placed side by side in a coexistent antecedent and consequent relationship. By following the events of the first movement carefully, the listener becomes engaged in a process of understanding, a process yielding a truth at the end. The forces used here are genuinely dramatic ones. In strictly musical terms, the opposition can be reduced to a conflict between stability and instability, a process not unlike that of any significant dramatic work. But instead of using characters or ideas or beliefs, the symphonist embodies his conflict in musical gestures which, in an archetypal way, parallel human conflicts. In the conclusion of the first movement of No. 83, Haydn can be seen to be demonstrating a very fundamental yet difficult truth: opposition is inevitable, and the highest form of unity is not the one which eliminates conflict. On the contrary, it is one in which opposing forces can coexist. The best minds of Haydn's age aspired to tolerance not dogmatism. It is precisely this message that can be heard in many of Haydn's late symphonies. (p. 88)

While the musical analysis offered is somewhat generalized, it is nonetheless perceptive and sound; its ability, however, to serve as evidence for the larger point will remain a judgement buried within individual intellectual proclivities.

The second part of the book deals with the issue of audience reception in England in the 1790's and functions as a transition to a discussion of the London symphonies. In this section Schroeder outlines the nature of the composer-audience relationship as understood during the eighteenth century, Haydn's relationship to his English audience, and his known contacts with various prominent Englishmen of an "enlightened" cast of mind. The larger purpose, however, is to set the context for a discussion of how the London symphonies constitute an expression of Haydn's "enlightened" opinions and the way these views are conveyed to an audience in symphonic terms.

The kernel of the book, then, lies in its final section, which further expands and develops the central idea, one originally expressed in an article by Schroeder in the *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* in 1985. This central idea — the reciprocal nature of Haydn's relationship with his audience, seen against a backdrop of Enlightenment attitudes — is approached from three angles: (1) the nature of sonata form itself as an embodiment of Enlightenment thought, (2) the nature and extent of extra-musical "messages" embedded within the thematic material itself, and (3) Haydn's attempts to gauge and control the impact of his symphonies upon his audience and his efforts to win them over and to make them receptive to his moral ideas. The most compelling of these arguments is contained in the second chapter of this section, which describes a still insufficiently recognized aspect of Haydn's melodic style — its roots in folk music. Instead of focusing upon the more abstractly based issue of the musical topoi present in Haydn's symphonies (as suggested by Leonard Ratner and Wye Allanbrook, among others), Schroeder side-steps this question in favour of a discussion of the specific folk song material that, consciously or unconsciously, may have served as the basis for many of Haydn's thematic ideas. This notion is, of course, part of the intellectual baggage of many Marxist-oriented writers, but it is refreshing and stimulating to have this point presented neutrally and persuasively, free of political considerations. The final chapter is the most speculative and brings together the various strands of thought presented through the book. It is here that the fundamental differences between the traditions of musical analysis and musical sociology emerge the most clearly, requiring of the reader an ability and willingness to make certain crucial leaps of intellectual faith.

Schroeder's book is gracefully written, well argued, and thoroughly researched. Although I was not fully persuaded by its all its arguments, I do believe that the book makes an important and useful addition to the literature on Haydn and his symphonies. Moreover, in bringing together the issues and language of musical analysis and those of musical sociology, it stands as a challenge to others (and there are many) who are trying to extricate themselves from the limitations of traditional historical musicology and are attempting to express ever more sophisticated and all-embracing historical formulations.

Kenneth DeLong

FERNAND OUELLETTE. *Edgard Varèse*. Édition revue et augmentée par l'auteur, précédée de « Varèse, l'exception » et suivie d'une bibliographie et discographie entièrement remise à jour par Louise Hirbour. Paris: Christian Bourgois éditeur, Collection Musique/Passé/Présent, 1989, 343 p.

Il y a de ces travaux de bénédictin qui, accomplis dans l'ombre et le silence, deviennent, de par la rigueur et l'obstination de leur auteur, de véritables « bibles », des outils