

Sonata No.48 in C major, Hob. XVI:35	[14:47]	Sonata No.49 in C-sharp minor, Hob. XVI:36	[13:05]
1 Allegro con brio	6:08	11 Moderato	5:53
2 Adagio	5:35	12 Scherzando: Allegro con brio	3:05
3 Finale: Allegro	3:03	13 Menuet & Trio: Moderato	4:06
Sonata No.1 in G major, Hob. XVI:8	[5:06]	Sonata No.51 in E-flat major, Hob. XVI:38	[12:21]
4 Allegro	2:09	14 Allegro moderato	5:31
5 Menuet	1:02	15 Adagio	3:49
6 Andante	1:08	16 Finale: Allegro	3:00
7 Allegro	0:45	Sonata No.30 in D major, Hob. XVI:19	[19:06]
Sonata No.35 in A-flat major, Hob. XVI:43	[13:42]	17 Moderato	7:15
8 Moderato	6:07	18 Andante	8:48
9 Menuetto & Trio	2:22	19 Finale: Allegro assai	3:02
10 Rondo: Presto	5:11	Total duration	78:08

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HAYDN
Sonatas
Volume IV

LEON McCAWLEY
piano

Serving his masters by serving his music

In our notes for earlier releases in Leon McCawley's recordings of Haydn's Piano Sonatas, we have remarked on the composer seeming to utilise the medium as a kind of musical diary, his inspiration fired by many different sources, intimate and public.

It is interesting to place Haydn's Sonatas in their contemporaneous context yet there were relatively lengthy periods in his life when solo keyboard music was not essayed at all – disabusing the 'diary' theory – for, unlike similar works by Mozart or Beethoven, Haydn did not compose his piano sonatas to play in public himself.

Haydn's Piano Sonatas range over the late-Baroque to early Beethoven eras, mirroring the development of the instrument from clavichord and harpsichord to the fortepianos of various manufacturers. Consequently, Haydn's approach to the instrument may sometimes be equally termed experimental, reflecting the greater range and compass of the emerging pianoforte keyboard – yet the expressive impact of what Hans Keller might have termed Haydn's 'pure music' (wherein notes are related only to one another, not arising solely as the result of outside inspiration) remains constant after 250 years, as significant when played on today's pianos as it was to his contemporaries.

Haydn's contemporaries were many and varied, yet his genius was certainly recognised by them. For most of his creative life, Haydn was the servant of

various masters, almost all of whom were cultured, music-loving members of the aristocracy. Thankfully, they recognised his artistry, and the prestige his music accrued to their courts and households was something they were keen to support.

Haydn himself, from the most humble of stock, took his inspiration from a myriad of sources, his music ranging from reflecting on the cries of street-sellers to the *Seven Last Words of Christ*.

The **Sonata No.48 in C major** (Hob. XVI:35) was first published in Vienna by Artaria in 1780, one of a set of six that inaugurated Haydn's eventual long relationship with the company. Although founded in 1770, Artaria only began to publish music eight years later. These sonatas are amongst the earliest in Haydn's output to have been written for the new fortepiano and were dedicated to the musical sisters Franziska and Maria Katherina von Auenbrugger. It may be stretching the point, but perhaps the C major Sonata was conceived to be the easiest of the six – perhaps to draw the less-than-technically-complete player to the set. However the success of the entire publication came about, there can be little doubt that the C major Sonata contributed mightily to it.

The Sonata's structure is almost wholly Classical, but here Haydn is capable of the occasional expressive surprises: for example, *forte* followed by *piano* followed by *forte* (and so on), and a *pianissimo* conclusion to the first movement – with crossed hands! The Sonata ends with a lively minuet enclosing a 24-

bar C minor episode: towards the end of the finale, Haydn daringly (one of the first examples in his entire output) introduces augmented rhythms, as though he is saying “Ah, you thought you were going to hear *x*, as most composers would have written, but you’re going to hear something else – an arpeggiated *y*”. Yet these ‘surprises’ appear to grow quite naturally, organically, so that the attentive listener is left smiling at the composer’s subtlety.

The **Sonata No.1 in G major** (Hob. XVI:8) is the very first ‘piano sonata’ by Haydn – in inverted commas, of course, as he would not have immediately recognised the term. Dating from 1766 (the year the Esterháza Palace was finished, to where Haydn and the court had moved from Eisenstadt) the Sonata’s brief four movements take around five minutes in total to perform – but the work should not automatically be considered ephemeral.

Laid out in the manner of a keyboard divertimento, yet structurally resembling sonata form, the intent of this work (and its bed-fellows) was more to entertain than to engage the intellect. The first movement *Allegro*, in abbreviated sonata form in 2/4, adheres to established principles, modulating from tonic to dominant, followed by a central episode before recapitulating the original material in G major; yet the treatment is far from routine – here are rhythmic subtleties and fleet counterpoint.

The second movement is a Minuet, *senza* trio, of just 16 bars; the third is equally brief, both possessing quite expressive artistry. The *Allegro* finale, in 3/8, is of two equal halves, each repeated, yet the demands on the player go

beyond the amateur: here, the value of a comprehensive technique encourages the keyboardist to hone their skill – an approach to music-making that Béla Bartók adopted in *Mikrokosmos* more than a century and a half later in Budapest, 100 miles from Esterháza.

It was Haydn’s practicality as a composer, his instinctive musical reaction to whatever experiences that came his way, that makes his large output consistently wide-ranging and compelling. His music is invariably full of delightful surprises, and is very rich in a deep and delicate poetry peculiar to him – factors which are not always justly appreciated, even today, and leading us to think that there is possibly an ‘extra-musical’ impetus to the **Sonata No. 35 in A-flat major** (Hob. XVI:43), which dates from *circa* 1773.

The rare tonality of A flat major appears just twice in Haydn’s Sonata output (the first in No.31, *circa* 1767). It is interesting that the relative F minor is found once, in Haydn’s last keyboard masterpiece, the Variations of 1793, although the Symphony No.49, *La Passione*, of 1768 shares the key – uniquely, each of that symphony’s four movements is in F minor. It is also curious that this Sonata was not first published until 1783, in London, by Beardmore and Birchall. Aspects of Haydn’s creativity in the work may have contributed to the delay between composition and publication, for it remains an original and compositionally daring work. Its three movements are each in the same tonic key, the first of its three movements is marked *Moderato* – not the customary *Allegro* – and the second movement comprises two Minuets – the first of which is repeated. Here is yet another instance of Haydn’s profound originality.

Marked *Moderato*, the Sonata begins with a sturdy, distinctive six-bar theme, the forward momentum of which, combined with its expressive elegance, carries the myriad developmental aspects as the music continues to unfold.

The theme's dactylic rhythm and rising octave in its second half are all Haydn needs to create a fabric of natural elegance and expressive distinction, and although the subtleties of this music are demonstrably those of a master – especially the three-bar *Adagio* close before the recapitulation – the reassuring formality of which confirms the inherent classicism of his expression, yet the final bars, *pianissimo*, unexpectedly reveal his individual genius.

In this work, Haydn both acknowledges the classical formal style and rejects it. The Sonata lacks a slow movement, replaced by a unique pair of Minuets. Ostensibly formal, the course of the movement runs: Minuet I – Minuet II – Minuet I; the attentive listener may hear phrases reminiscent of the first movement, the formality of a pair of minuets enveloping the astonishing originality of Haydn's structural innovation.

The finale maintains the tonic key in a Rondo of fleet and subtle expression – the dynamic rarely rising above piano. Here, however, Haydn lets fly with a set of continuous variations on the main theme – a phrase here, a few bars there, once or twice a close – and then off we go again to the wonderful coda, which brings this demonstrable masterpiece to its remarkable conclusion.

The **Sonata No.49 in C-sharp minor** (Hob. XVI:36) is another of those dedicated to the Auenbrugger sisters. It is clear that here Haydn explored the developing fortepiano keyboard, particularly in respect of rarely-encountered tonal sequencing which the voicing of the new instrument made possible.

The Sonata opens, *Moderato*, with a strongly dramatic, attention-grabbing gesture, contrasted with quite different emotional ideas. The material demands extended organic working, but here Haydn does not retreat into pure theory: for him 'organic working' also means emotional expression – living organisms in time, it seems, melding at their end having spun a tapestry of almost symphonic thought.

The A major *Scherzando* (*not* 'Scherzo') could hardly be more different emotionally: here is a lightness of touch unencumbered by weightier thought, an ideal contrast to the first movement's surging nature. In the finale, Haydn plays another ace: a Minuet and Trio, with the rare direction *Moderato*. In this movement, varied aspects of the preceding movements, so different overall, find organic unity whilst veering unusually – in the event, wholly logically – to C sharp major for the Trio.

The **Sonata No.51 in E flat major** (Hob. XVI:38) is the third in our collection published by Artaria in 1780 and dedicated to the Auenbruggers. Intriguingly, the opening *Allegro moderato* appears to follow established sonata principles, yet Haydn surprises by his unique handling of the form – the movement is essentially monothematic, from which so much grows and is literally

developed – even the apparent ‘second subject’ can be found to have its roots in the opening theme. Here, surely, is a great composer at work.

The second movement moves to the relative C minor, *Adagio*. One might sense a quickening of tension, if not of tempo, by the choice of a solemn tonality, but emotion is lightened by being cast as a *siciliana*. And in the finale, the shortest of the three, Haydn’s originality continues by alluding to Minuet and Trio – not quite inhabiting the form, following the *siciliana* with *attacca*, marked *Allegro*, and thereby fully restoring the home tonality.

With the **Sonata No.30 in D major** (Hob. XVI:19) we return to earlier times. Dating from 1767, it is one of Haydn’s most extended keyboard works, exhibiting much *galanterie*, a delightful example of ‘Papa’ Haydn’s character. The opening *Moderato* theme of eight bars is subtly subdivided, with unusual underlying harmony; the development is anything but conventional and the movement virtually ends as a ‘dying fall’ – catching unwary listeners out.

The second movement, *Andante*, exhibits an airy character full of expressive detail, the music passing through a surprising range of keys, each with their own expressive nature, occasionally catching out the unwary listener. The finale, *Allegro assai*, unfolds like quicksilver, with Haydn – and his audience – delighting in the myriad expression as the jubilant tonality propels the music to its breathless conclusion.

Robert Matthew-Walker © 2021

LEON McCAWLEY



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British pianist Leon McCawley won both First Prize in the International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna and Second Prize in the Leeds International Piano Competition in 1993.

Notable recitals in past seasons include the London Piano Series at Wigmore Hall (where he will be Artist in Residence for the 2021/22 season), International Piano Series at London's Southbank Centre, New York's Lincoln Center, Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC. McCawley performs frequently with many of the top British orchestras and made his sixth appearance at the BBC Proms in August 2019 performing John Ireland's Piano Concerto in a special concert to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Sir Henry Wood's birth.

Further afield he has performed with Dallas Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra and St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra among others.

McCawley's wide-ranging discography has received many accolades including two Editor's Choice awards in *Gramophone*, a *Gramophone* Critic's Choice for his recording of Barber's Piano Music (SOMM) and two *Diapason d'Or* for his boxed set of Mozart's Complete Piano Sonatas (AVIE) and Haydn's Sonatas and Variations (SOMM).

Leon studied at Chetham's School of Music, Manchester with Heather Slade-Lipkin and at the Curtis Institute of Music with Eleanor Sokoloff. He also worked with Nina Milkina in London.

Leon is a professor of piano at London's Royal College of Music and is married to the painter, Anna Hyunsook Paik.

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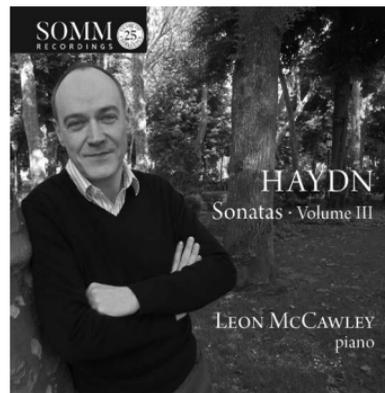
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