

ARTS

# Experiencing Haydn

by Stanley Feldman

Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra  
Massey Hall

Last week, I had the pleasure of attending a concert of the Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra's 90/91 concert series.

This year's program consists of a series of six concerts, each one devoted to the music of a different composer, along with appropriate guest artists. On this particular occasion, it was the turn of Franz Joseph Haydn, who lived from 1732 to 1809.

The concert opened with four of his Twenty-four Minuets (Hoboken IX:16).

These were composed during the period of Haydn's greatest works, which include the London Symphony, and were originally intended as dance music. In fact, the minuet was commonly used as a middle movement in orchestral compositions, until it was replaced by the "scherzo".

Each dance lasted about two or three minutes, and was divided into three movements. Haydn's fascination with the clarinet at this time is given full rein.

American soprano, Julianne Baird, then joined the stage to sing arias from three of Haydn's operas: *La Vera Costanza* (True Constancy), composed in 1778, *Il Mondo della Luna* (The World on the Moon), from 1777, and finally *La Fedelta Premiata* (Fidelity Rewarded), from 1781. Baird's fame as a leading interpreter of early music compositions is spreading, and her magnificent renderings were sweet and precise.

The first half of the program concluded with the Horn Concerto No. 2 in D major, composed during the 1760s, while Haydn was working as Vice-Kapellmeister for Prince Esterhazy.

This piece is three movements and the soloist was Meir Rimoni, currently the principal horn with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. He was so well received by the Massey Hall regulars, that he then performed a light-hearted encore through a garden hose with a plastic funnel.

The concert continued after the interval with Baird singing two arias from *The Creation*. This oratorio, is said to have been composed for Handel from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, is one of Haydn's greatest masterpieces, completed in 1798, when he was 66-years-old.

"With verdure clad" tells of the creation of the fields, trees and flowers, while "On mighty pinions" depicts the creation of the birds, including eagles, larks, doves and nightingales.

Thirty-three years earlier (1765), Haydn composed Symphony No. 31 in D major (the "Hornsignal"), a work which underscores wonderful solo parts for many of the instruments that would have been included in an 18th century band, including the flute, oboe, violin, cello, double-bass, and of course, the french horn.

The first movement opened with a series of brilliant horn calls, reminiscent of a fox-hunt.

The adagio second movement had a wonderful melody, almost a duet, for first violin and first cello, linked in an elaborate setting. The minuet then brought out the horns again.

The fourth movement finale was in the form of a theme and seven variations, recalling the earlier horn fanfares, and ending in a mighty crescendo.

The orchestra was appropriately down-sized to the scale of Haydn's time, and was energetically conducted by its artistic director, Paul Robinson.



# Easy to forget

by Lia Marsman

*The Hard Way*  
directed by John Badham  
Universal Pictures

*The Hard Way* isn't a hard film to forget.

The story is based on the usual Hollywood situation of the hard-nosed cop (James Woods), who is obsessed with capturing a daring serial killer while being saddled with a spoiled but very earnest actor (Michael J. Fox) who is researching for a role as a cop.

Both Woods and Fox get more than they bargained for, but not the audience.

Besides some excellent stunts (the final confrontation has the killer and his captors hanging precariously from the giant billboard of the actor's face), and a few sparse chuckles at the antics of Fox's character, all that's left is the caricature of the two actors' public image.

It seems, as I hear it, that both Fox and Woods had a lot of fun spoofing themselves, perhaps more than those watching them.

However, *The Hard Way* shows the true nature of a policeman's work — hard and occasionally dangerous — versus the glamorized Hollywood version of a cop's life. Under

the parody, hidden behind the laughs, the film contrasts the hard mean streets of New York and the phoney Hollywood glitz.

For Fox, it was also an enlightening experience as he gets a chance to take a close look at the world of big film stars from the outside, and throw a spotlight on the erratic and fickle behavior of a popular actor. In his own words, the star can sometimes behave like "a jerk."

The film also points out the public's tendency to see these celluloid heroes as larger than life.

When Lang (played by Fox), is noticed by a girl, she remarks, "You look a lot like Lang, but of course you are much shorter."

Also worthy of note, is a cameo appearance by Penny Marshall as a successful agent with a "let's make a buck" attitude.

Granted the weakness of the plot, this film is an effective study in contrasts: the repressed, driven cop and the chatty, spoiled star to whom everything comes easy ("Have the studio fix it."). Even physically, the two characters could not be more different — the tall, tough Woods versus the small, cute Fox.

To sum it up; keep your expectations low, and you will spend an entertaining ninety minutes.



performance (paf'ormans) n. 1. the act, process, or art of performing. 2. an artistic or dramatic production.

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