

Joseph Haydn – Symphonies Nos. 93 & 95 (Harnoncourt)

Written by bluesever

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Symphony No. 93 in D 1. *Adagio. Allegro assai* 2. *Largo cantabile* 3. *Menuetto* 4. *Finale. Presto ma non troppo*
Symphony No. 95 in Cm 5. *Allegro* 6. *Andante*
7. *Menuetto. Trio* 8. *Finale. Vivace*
London Symphony Orchestra Nikolaus Harnoncourt - conductor

The London-based concert promoter Johann Peter Salomon (1745-1815) was in Cologne when he heard of the death of Nikolaus Esterházy I, in September 1790; he immediately went to Vienna to secure an arrangement with Haydn, whom he had tried unsuccessfully to engage several times during the 1780s. Now freed from his commitments to the Esterházy family for the first time in 30 years, Haydn was finally prepared to seize this very lucrative and exciting opportunity. The first of Haydn's two subsequent excursions to London began in December of 1790 and was, by all accounts, a great success; he remained in London for two concert seasons, returning to Vienna in July 1792. The composer wrote six new symphonies for the concert series; these are now numbered 93-98, the first six of the so-called "London" symphonies.

The third of these, the Symphony No. 93 in D major, was most likely completed during the fall and winter of 1791; it was first performed on February 17, 1792 as part of Salomon's 1792 concert season. It is scored for two each of flute, oboe, bassoon, horn, and trumpet, with timpani and strings.

No 95 is the only 'London' symphony in the minor, and the only one without a slow introduction. For late-eighteenth-century listeners the minor mode implied a gravitas that made a solemn preamble superfluous. No 95's stark unison 'motto' recalls Haydn's previous C minor Symphony, No 78 of 1782, one of a trio of works written for an aborted London visit. As in the earlier work, the motto invites strenuous contrapuntal treatment. In No 95, though, Haydn is

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careful to cajole as well as challenge his audience, contrasting C minor severity with an ear-tickling second theme, charmingly adorned in the C major recapitulation with a violin solo for Salomon.

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