

# Haydn Anniversary Literature in Spanish



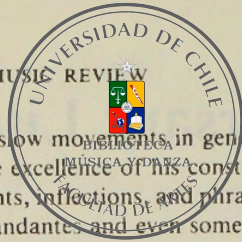
THE DEAN OF SPANISH MUSIC PERIODICALS, *Ritmo Revista Musical Ilustrada* (which began publication at Madrid in November 1929), remembered both the bicentennial of Haydn's birth and the sesquicentennial of his death in issues dated April 1932 and April–May 1959. However, neither Isusi's "En el segundo centenario de Haydn," iv/53, pages 3–4, nor Leopold Nowak's "En el 150 aniversario de Joseph Haydn," xxix/302, 8–9, professes to uncover buried facts. Apart from didactic articles on the *Creation* (June 1977, 44–45) and *Clock Symphony* (September 1979, 33–34), *Ritmo* in the late 1970's did respond to the Haydn renaissance with reviews of opera recordings—*La fedeltà premiata* in March 1977 (this issue also contains a review of *Il ritorno de Tobia*) and *Lo Speziale* in December 1979.

The best sesquicentennial article published at Madrid appeared not in a music magazine. Rather, it was Salvador Moreno's well researched "Haydn y España," *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, no. 120 (December 1959), pages 199–204. Moreno, who had patriotically published "Ángeles músicos en México" in a previous issue of the same monthly (no. 106, October 1958, pp. 59–70), took special interest in the Marqués de Valde-Iñigo because of the marqués's birth at Veracruz, Mexico. To obtain neglected data, Moreno visited Cádiz where Serafín Pro y Ruiz, city chronicler, generously placed at his disposal such classics of Cádiz scholarship as José Gandulfo's *Carta Edificante* (1807), Nicolás María de Cambiaso y Verdes's *Memorias* (1829), and José María León y Domínguez's *Recuerdos gaditanos* (1897). Pro y Ruiz's library also contained monographs on Cádiz painting and architecture put to good use in Moreno's article. Only the mischance that Moreno's article began with misinformation concerning the publication history of various versions of the *Seven Last Words*—thus dismaying any Haydn specialist who may have started reading it—perhaps accounts for its never having entered the main stream of Haydn scholarship.

In South America, the best sesquicentennial tribute traced the fortunes of Haydn's music in the Spanish-speaking New World after World War I. By good fortune the author was Alejo Carpentier, "regarded as one of the most powerful Spanish-American writers of recent decades." With consummate literary grace, his "1809—Joseph Haydn—1959," published in *El Nacional*, Caracas, March 31, 1959, and anthologized together with other Haydn indexed material in *Ese músico que llevo dentro* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1980), i, 150–152, ii, 259, and *passim*, makes such points as these:

Some years back it was the fashion to disparage Haydn. A famous composer once told me that "Haydn's music is quite agreeable to listen to, but if you do not hear it you lose nothing." His piano sonatas were assigned to unprepared students. Mere beginners thumped the Ox Minuet and the Gypsy Rondo. Among his symphonies, we heard the *Oxford*, *La Reine*, the *Farewell*, and three or four others.

Many of us were classing Haydn as an amiable musician, elegant enough after the eighteenth-century manner, but not very profound or meaty. Nothing further from the truth! We have heard his sonatas so badly played in conservatories that we have ended by not giving them the attention that they deserve. But let us return to them, listen to them attentively, analyze his



andantes and larghetts, his slow movements in general. Doing so, we will be astounded by the depth of his thought, the excellence of his construction. In some movements occupying scarcely a page there are accents, inflections, and phrases in which the highly wrought emotion prefigures Beethoven's best andantes, and even some Romantic preludes.

Granted that his minuets and rondo finales bespeak the frivolity of a bygone epoch (one ingenious friend called the adorable finale of the *Oxford* "an eighteenth-century Viennese *Petrouchka*," knowing quite well what he was saying). But in his less roguish moments, especially when he does not yield to major-minor formulas, a wholehearted musician speaks whose inner life was much richer and more intense than that of most of his contemporaries. With the innovations of the Mannheim composers now better understood, he does not need to be hailed the "Father of the Symphony" to justify his fame. He brought it where it was when Beethoven began, enough of a deed!

After a lifetime of composing so many works that even yet [1959] their cataloguing remains incomplete, he broke fresh ground with the first classical concerto for trumpet [Anton Weidinger's *E♭ organisierte Trompete* = keyed trumpet (1796)], and with charming humility confessed himself just then beginning to know how to write for *Harmoniemusik*. At the age of 66 he completed one of the towering masterpieces of his century, *The Creation* (1798), but with a mind still so orderly that the opening Chaos is far removed from the chaotic.

In another article for *El Nacional*, January 10, 1952, Carpentier recalled the Venezuelan Francisco de Miranda's visit to Esterháza in late October, 1785. Despite "not liking to work with instruments for which he does not write outstandingly" (Lelis's letter of March 24, 1785), Haydn's marches ("Märsche" in Hoboken, 1, 541-546) afforded Carpentier one more instance of Haydn's versatility. Whether *Feldparthien* for the princely 150 grenadiers attired in Prussian style, trios for the prince playing baryton, operas with a specially designed part for Luigia Polzelli, or Masses such as flowed from his pen to satisfy the tastes of Nicolaus II, Haydn never wrote less than "outstandingly." In his article published at Caracas January 10, 1952, Carpentier signals even so minor a work as the Marcia in the first act of Haydn's *Armida* (1783) as something Miranda might have heard at Esterháza in 1785 and a work equally capable of giving Venezuelans pleasure in 1952.