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NB:

- All translations of quotations from letters, diaries etc. are my own and may differ from others in the Anglophone Haydn literature.
- // indicates a page break in the original German text, with the page number of the following page inserted between the lines.

Musical Urbanity: Haydn in London

Abstract

The vividness with which Haydn's letters and diaries capture his two London visits make the city's musical culture seem much closer to our own experience than that of a continental court composer. But the conditions that shaped this musical life were historically highly specific and interwoven in complex feedback loops, and the society supporting this musical life stood on the cusp between older hierarchies and new ways of social self-organisation.

I. 'Infinitely big city' – Haydn's London experience

Haydn's two visits to London in the 1790s were not just high points of his career, but also extraordinary personal experiences for him, and we know from his letters and diaries more about them than about any other phase of his life. They are also the nodal points of paradoxes that cast light upon London as a musical place in the late 18th century. The first paradox is that the invitation to Haydn to come to London was due to a fame he had acquired in circumstances that had nothing in common with those of London's musical life: as a salaried court composer in the provinces, far from the musical public that made him famous. The second paradox is that the musical life Haydn encountered after having signed the contract with Johann Peter Salomon much better fits our own idea of musical life than the one he had spent most of his career in. It is much easier for us to imagine the life of the star composer in busy London than that of the provincial court musician; but

the latter represented the standard situation for Haydn and most of his colleagues, whereas London's music scene had no equivalent in the second half of the 18th century.

Haydn's letters and diaries bear vivid witness to this uniqueness, of the musical scene as well as of the city. Like many contemporaries, he is fascinated by the 'infinitely big city of London, which simply astounds one because of its manifold beauties and wonders'¹, and some of the wonders soon affect him directly: There is the cult of celebrity, into which he is integrated straight away, when during the first three days of his visit he is 'handed round all the newspapers'², /222/ or when he is 'stared at by everyone'³ during a concert he wants to attend without attracting attention, a cult of celebrity he also notices when he writes about a scandal-saturated biography of the *primadonna* Elisabeth Billington, whose publication had been preceded by court cases in which she had tried to ban it⁴ – an incident we can easily imagine in today's yellow press. There is also a musical life in which competition is part of the business, a business Haydn is dragged into when Salomon's competitor, the Professional Concert, hires Haydn's ex-student Ignaz Pleyel. Publicity is key: 'so, there will be a bloody harmonic war between master and pupil; all the newspapers have started to write about it'⁵, as Haydn writes to Marianne von Genzinger.

The commercial nature of London's musical life also shines through when Haydn writes about the fire at the Pantheon, built in 1772 and for a short while a competitor of William Taylor's King's Theatre (for which Haydn wrote the opera *L'anima del filosofo*, though it was not performed because of problems with the licence). In its two years as an opera house, the Pantheon made so much loss that its aristocratic patrons, the Duke of Bedford and the Marquis of Salisbury, pulled the fiery emergency brake.⁶ This musical life also occupies Haydn's thoughts when he observes how Samuel Arnold was cheated out of the profit on his opera *The Banditti* (Covent Garden 1781)⁷ – the flip-side of an entrepreneurial musical scene that offered unprecedented financial opportunities to

¹ Joseph Haydn to Marianne von Genzinger, 8th January 1791; printed in: Joseph Haydn, *Gesammelte Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. by Dénes Bartha, Kassel 1965, p. 251. (From here on short: *GBA*.) After London had begun to overtake Paris in terms of population around 1700, at the time of Haydn's visits it had ca. 50% more inhabitants than the latter, and about four times as many as Vienna, the major city Haydn knew. London was a city of almost a million people, the biggest in Europe.

² *Ibid.*, p. 251.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ In Haydn's 1st London notebook (*GBA*, pp. 486f.)

⁵ Haydn to M. von Genzinger, 17th January 1792 (*GBA*, pp. 274f.).

⁶ More in Curtis Price, 'Italian Opera and Arson in Late 18th-Century London', in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42 (1989), pp. 55-107.

⁷ In Haydn's 4th London notebook (*GBA*, p. 554).

Haydn himself. (With a benefit concert on 4th May 1795 he earns 4,000 guilders, three times his annual salary in Esterháza: ‘This one can only do in England.’⁸)

Haydn’s new role as a star in a commercial system that required the public demonstration of such star status meant on the one hand liberation from the constraints of a court employee, but on the other hand brought the new demands of the market: ‘How sweet some amount of liberty tastes [...] I realise its beneficence, though I have more work to do. The knowledge that one isn’t an indentured servant recompenses for all the effort’, Haydn writes in September 1791 to Marianne von Genzinger.⁹ Half a year later, the effort has come to the fore, when Haydn writes: ‘not a day, not a single day am I without work, and I shall thank the Lord when I have the chance to leave London, the sooner the better’.¹⁰

The impression of familiarity crops up again and again when one reads Haydn’s letters and diaries, not just in musical matters, but in a range of little observations: When Haydn notes that the British state debt /223/ can be pictured as a 200-mile train of carts laden with 6,000 pounds of silver each, he uses the kind of image one could also imagine in an article in a modern newspaper.¹¹ The busyness of the city becomes an annoyance to the musician, who wishes he could ‘fly to Vienna for a while to have more quiet for work, because the noise from the sellers in the streets is unbearable’.¹² In other respects, too, Haydn’s London is similar to the modern one: ‘everything is alarmingly expensive’.¹³ To go by Haydn’s report from a horse race in Ascot, there does not seem to have been much difference to today’s equivalent event¹⁴, and ‘a pack of dishevelled chaps’ bawling a song at night one can easily picture as modern Londoners after an evening in the pub: ‘They are bellowing so loudly that you can hear them a 1,000 feet from the road, even in the furthest corner.’¹⁵

But in that familiarity lies a danger. That the London of the 1790s may have been closer to our own experience of big cities than any other place of the time says more about the proportions of historical distance than about its absolute value: ‘closer’ is not the same as ‘close’. Seen from afar, London musical life of that time can be described as a foreshadowing of a broader modernisation of institutions and of circumstances of production and reception of music. Seen up close, however, that musical life is the result of concrete and only partially connected conditions, conditions that were

⁸ Ibid., p. 553.

⁹ Haydn to M. von Genzinger, 17th September 1791 (*GBA*, pp. 260f.).

¹⁰ Haydn to M. von Genzinger, 2nd March 1792 (*GBA*, p. 280).

¹¹ Haydn’s 1st London notebook (*GBA*, p. 484).

¹² Haydn to M. von Genzinger, 8th January 1791 (*GBA*, p. 252).

¹³ Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁴ See Haydn’s 1st London notebook (*GBA*, p. 487-489).

¹⁵ Haydn’s 2nd London notebook (*GBA*, p. 5160).

specific to the place and time. And even though this musical life is closer to us than that of the court composer in Esterháza, a teleological perspective should not entirely obscure the differences. These two aspects are briefly outlined in the following section.

II. Music in London – conditions

Central is London's centrality. Its location on a navigable river in the corner of the country closest to the Continent had made London a key place already in Roman times. The politically unified structure of England that resulted from the Norman invasion of 1066 (the 'Celtic fringe' of Wales, Scotland and Ireland was a different matter) brought with it a centralism that dragged almost all functions of national importance to London. The centuries-long stability of this situation made London not just the political centre of the country, but also the centre of trade, culture, lifestyle and fashion. In the 18th century, London's position was strengthened yet further, when with the Act of Union in 1707 Scotland ceased to exist as a competitor on the same island and became part of Great Britain. The failure of the Jacobite uprisings of 1715, 1719 and 1745/46 confirmed that situation for the second half of the century, during which London's population rose from 700,000 to ca. 1,000,000. The next-biggest English cities, Bristol and Norwich, /224/ around 1800 had not quite 70,000 and a bit more than 30,000 inhabitants respectively.¹⁶ In addition, the English trade network that rapidly developed throughout the 18th century gave London international importance as well.¹⁷

In matters musical, though, the situation was different: The unstable 17th century, with civil war, Commonwealth, Restoration and the 'Glorious Revolution' had prevented the development of musical institutions as it had taken place at the same time in Italy and Germany, not least with regard to opera. Perhaps things could have gone as they did in France, after William Davenport had received a patent for musical theatre in 1639 – 20 years before Lully in Paris. But the civil war scuppered the realisation of his plans. Even Henry Lawes', Henry Cooke's and Matthew Locke's music for Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* (1658) – written to circumvent the Commonwealth ban on (spoken) theatre performances – has not been preserved: an ironic confirmation of the missed historical opportunity. Charles' II hope to install a court opera after the French model he had seen in operation during his exile did not develop beyond attempts by Locke or Dryden's and Luis Grabus'

¹⁶ On the other hand, this population rise was in line with that of England and Wales overall. In the 16th and 17th centuries, London had grown about five times as quickly as the rest of the country; see Stephen Inwood, *A History of London*, London & Basingstoke 1998, p. 269.

¹⁷ The effects of that trade on London itself is captured in the description of the panorama of different nationalities in the streets of the city in Book VII of *The Prelude; or Growth of a Poet's Mind* (ed. by Ernest de Selincourt, Oxford 1926, version of 1805/06, lines 190-196, 229-232, 239-243).

Albion and Albanus (1685), modelled on the French *tragédie lyrique*. The centralist structure of the country also meant that there was no developed art-music culture in regional centres, at least no secular one; the exception was the church music practiced at the provincial cathedrals.

It is safe to assume that it was not contempt for the arts nor lack of musical talent¹⁸ but the absence of regional centres for art music that led to a lack of indigenous musicians: There was no critical mass of professional opportunities that would have made music an attractive option. No institutional regulation of music as a profession meant a free market that since the /225/ early 18th century attracted more and more foreign musicians to London¹⁹; the lack of a geographically broad, professional art-music culture meant that these foreign musicians encountered fewer indigenous competitors than they would have in other countries.

The statistical data of Deborah Rohr's study of British musicians cover the entire period 1750-1850, and it is difficult to say how precisely they describe the situation around the time of Haydn's London visits; but since those fall in the middle of Rohr's period of study, one may cautiously assume that the figures paint the right picture. There is the fact that 56.1% of the musicians captured by Rohr's study worked in London. Throughout the 18th century, the population of London made up only ca. 10% of the population of the country as a whole, and the 56.1% show the importance of London as a musical centre. During the period encompassed by Rohr, more musicians from Italy (114) and Germany (115) worked in London than musicians from London itself (100); other foreigners were comparatively unimportant (10 from France, 11 from other Western European countries, 12 from Central and Eastern Europe and 4 from the British colonies). In the other direction, Rohr only counts five British musicians working in Germany, one in Italy and four in France (in addition to 32 internationally peripatetic musicians).²⁰

¹⁸ As was suspected especially by German observers in the 18th century, e.g. F-I [= Johann Nikolaus Forkel], 'Ueber den Zustand der Musik in England' [= On the Condition of Music in England], in: *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 2 (1799/1800), pp. 6-9 (though Forkel points out that the economic potency of England guaranteed a professional musical life at a high level); or Anonymous, 'Nachrichten: London, d. 4ten März' [= News: London, 4th March], in: *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 7 (1804/05), pp. 470-476; or Gebhard Friedrich August Wendeborn, *Der Zustand des Staats, der Religion, der Gelehrsamkeit und der Kunst in Großbritannien gegen das Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* [= *The Condition of the State, the Religion, Scholarship and Art in great Britain towards the End of the Eighteenth Century*], vol. 4, Berlin 1788, pp. 355f. Wendeborn was the pastor of a German church in Ludgate Hill in London 1767-1793 and the London correspondent of the *Hamburgische Korrespondent* (= *The Hamburg Correspondent*). His *Beyträge zur Kenntniß Grosbritanniens vom Jahr 1779* [= *Contributions to the Understanding of Great Britain in the Year 1779*] had been published in 1780 by Meyer in Lemgo/Westphalia, edited by Wendeborn's friend Georg Forster and served as a starting point for the later, four-volume work.

¹⁹ See e.g. Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 12f.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 30-33. In his 1st London notebook, Haydn tries to give an account of London's musical scene, and the names he lists confirms that not just prominent foreign musicians were working in London, but that music was dominated by foreigners at all levels (see *GBA*, pp. 496-501).

London's port did not just process two thirds of Britain's maritime trade; many of the traded goods, especially luxury goods, never left London.²¹ A city that had become used to the import of luxury products from all corners of the globe²² might have seen music in the same light, especially Italian opera, but in the second half of the century also modern instrumental music. London as the country's political centre brought the aristocracy at least for part of the year to the capital; the 'London season' developed on the basis of the annual sessions of parliament since 1689.²³ The attraction of London for the /226/ aristocracy – for whom the season became an arena of jockeying for social position – made musical patronage at home unattractive even for those who could have afforded it. Instead the urban stomping ground offered a new solution: to pool resources and to support a (semi-)public musical life whose financial potential was all the greater.

Feedback loops were important: There was enough money to import foreign music and musicians as luxuries, and there was not much home-grown musical competition. The resulting preponderance of foreign musicians may have discouraged the British even more from choosing music as their profession, and cemented the idea of music as a Continental luxury. The second feedback loop had to do with the centripetal effect of London: Its political importance and the resulting formation of an urban aristocracy keen to amuse itself and to show off provided means and motive for a rich musical life. The fact that for want to indigenous musicians and because of London's financial potency international stars were bought in (or rather: international musicians were bought in and made into stars in the framework of this new public musical life), promoted music as a luxury product and as a playing field for the exhibition of taste.²⁴

Music was a relatively neutral playing field, different from the potentially controversial spoken theatre. This potential had led to the Licensing Act of 1737, which gave the Lord Chamberlain the option to pre-censor plays rendered the stage politically harmless. The (monopolistic) Italian opera was politically less problematic (or at least less obviously problematic) because of the foreign

²¹ In 1736, ca. 70% of all English tea and coffee merchants were working in London; see Michael Reed, 'London and its Hinterland 1600-1800: the View from the Provinces', in: *Capital Cities and their Hinterlands in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Peter Clark & Bernard Lepetit, Aldershot 1996, pp. 51-83, especially p. 55.

²² Tea consumption and import rose by a factor of 15 during the 18th century. Especially during the last two decades the import of dutiable goods such as tobacco, soap, printed fabrics or candles rose twice as fast as the population; see Neil McKendrick, John Brewer & John H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society. The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England*, London 1982, p. 28f.

²³ See for example Reed, 'London and its Hinterland' (= footnote 21), p. 70, and Mary Greig, 'Leading the Fashion: The Material Culture of London's *beau monde*', in: *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, ed. by John Styles & Amanda Vickery, London & New Haven 2006, pp. 296-313, esp. p. 309.

²⁴ As far as Italian opera was concerned, this fitted into the English Italianophilia that – fostered by the Grand Tour – promoted Italian painting, sculpture and classical and neo-classical architecture as aesthetic models; see e.g. Roy Strong, *The Spirit of Britain. A Narrative History of the Arts*, London 1999, pp. 392-414.

language, and concerts were not affected by the Licensing Act. That concerts were not regulated at all²⁵ made them interesting for musical entrepreneurs, and with the ensuing competition between different ventures, in the late 18th century concert life could provide an alternative for the liveliness of the theatre scene. The status of some forms of music as a luxury import made them suitable for the ‘conspicuous consumption’ which members of ‘fashionable society’ used to show themselves as arbiters of artistic judgement: the emergence of a musical life with competing offerings enabled and required an art discourse one could use to prove one’s knowledge of trends and one’s taste.²⁶

If this art discourse was part of the social function of opera and concert as a meeting place for ‘fashionable society’, it took place in a press landscape that had unfolded in parallel to the development of musical life, after the scrapping of the Licensing Act for printed publications in 1695 had enabled the growth of the press. Aesthetic and moral discourse had accompanied music since Addison’s and Steele’s articles in *The Spectator* and *The Tatler* at the beginning of the century. But since the 1760s, the education of the public in matters of art appreciation had become a widespread project of the press, primarily with regard to the fine arts, but to some extent also with regard to music.²⁷ That Haydn was ‘handed round all the newspapers’ (see above) illustrates the symbiotic relationship between press and culture: The former provided publicity for the latter, but also needed public culture as fodder for news and debate – in yet another feedback loop the press fostered art discourse as much as it needed that discourse to be interesting for its readers. The articles triggered by the competition between Salomon and the Professional Concert, which only two weeks after Haydn’s arrival in London made disparaging remarks about his supposedly dwindling creative powers, say less about Haydn or the contemporary reception of his music than about the needs of a press that kicked off such discussions in its own interest.

²⁵ Matinées, however, had to be licensed 1752-1843; see Simon McVeigh, ‘An Audience for High-Class Music – Concert Promoters and Entrepreneurs in Late-Nineteenth-Century London’, in: *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914*, ed. by William Weber, Bloomington & Indianapolis 2004, pp. 162-182, esp. p. 163. In this respect London differed from cities with monopolistic institutions, such as the Leipzig Gewandhaus, which in the mid-19th century still granted licenses for most concerts in the city; see William Weber, ‘Musical Culture and the Capital City: The Epoch of the *beau monde* in London, 1700-1870’, in: *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. by Susan Wollenberg & Simon McVeigh, Aldershot 2004, pp. 71-89, esp. p. 77.

²⁶ The internationalism of London’s musical scene could become problematic when it could not be guaranteed anymore: The war with France put pressure on London music, and after the end of the Professional Concerts in 1793, from 1795 Johann Peter Salomon did not organise concerts anymore, because he had problems finding good singers on the Continent, and ‘it would be a presumption [...] to solicit the patronage of the Nobility and Gentry to an inferior entertainment’, as he explained in *The Times*; quoted after Thomas B. Milligan, *The Concert and London’s Musical Culture in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Epping 1983, p. 18. (Foreign) attractions had become the standard of London’s musical life, and if that standard could not be met, the public musical performances were not worth the effort anymore.

²⁷ See John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination. English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Chicago & London 1997, pp. 276-281.

Symbioses and synergies were important for Haydn's work in London in other respects as well: There is, for example, his endorsement of the pianos and harpsichords of Charles Clagget, which he praises in an open letter to the *Morning Herald* in April 1792, including the licence 'to make this known through such channels as may appear to be most advantageous to you'²⁸ – the celebrity testimonial as advertising strategy. There is also Haydn's parallel work as a composer prominent in public, as a composer and musician in private aristocratic households and as a music teacher. Even though British aristocrats in the second half of the 18th century did not have permanent court music ensembles, there were nevertheless numerous informal private concerts²⁹, often bringing together amateurs and professional musicians. In the letter to Marianne von Genzinger in which /228/ Haydn writes about the competition between Salomon and the Professional Concert, he also complains about the fact that 'here in London I am pressured into attending all the private music-making'.³⁰ In his notebooks he reports many of these private concerts, often connected to the cello-playing Prince of Wales.³¹ Even though Haydn had to file a suit with the British parliament for the money he should have received for conducting at the Prince's house, such private concerts were an important part of his work and source of his income in England.

Although his Royal contacts were relevant for Haydn, one factor in the development of London's public musical life was the – compared to other European countries – relatively limited importance of the court. Jürgen Habermas stressed in *Der Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* [= *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*] that after the 'Glorious Revolution' the significance of the Royal court diminished in comparison to that of London as a focal point for society and culture.³² This is certainly true in musical matters. As mentioned, the turbulent history of the 17th century had prevented the development of a court music. After 1688, the British monarch was dependent on parliament und financially restricted. Since the political configuration made the representation of monarchical sovereignty after the French model pointless, there was no demand for it. Consequently there was only the Chapel Royal (with its bases in London and Windsor) and the

²⁸ Haydn to Charles Clagget, April 1792 (*GBA*, p. 283).

²⁹ See Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (= footnote 27), p. 400, and Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 44-48.

³⁰ Haydn an Marianne von Genzinger, 17th January 1792 (*GBA*, p. 275).

³¹ See e.g. Haydn's 2nd London notebook, *GBA*, p. 507f., and the 4th London notebook, *ibid.*, pp. 551-553.

³² Jürgen Habermas, *Der Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* [orig. 1962], Neuwied & Berlin ²1965, p. 42f.

relatively modest King's and Queen's Bands, which served the private musical entertainment of the Royal family rather than the demonstration of cultural leadership.³³

Instead the monarchy got involved in the development of public musical life in London and supported new musical institutions such as the Academy of Music in Handel's time, or the Concert of Antient [sic] Music towards the end of the century. Different from the Academy of Ancient Music (founded in 1726), which primarily appealed to professional musicians and did not just perform 17th- and 18th-century music, but also much older composers such as Palestrina, Morley, Victoria or Byrd, the Concert of Antient Music (founded in 1776) used the modern form of the subscription concert and focused on music from the late 17th century onwards: concerti and concerti grossi, excerpts from operas, oratorios or sacred music, and madrigals. Since 1785, the king was a patron and attended the concerts. The public patronage of a concert series was a relatively cheap alternative to costly court music, but at the same time a statement: The Concert distinguished itself from emphatically modern /229/ series such as the Professional Concert of Salomon's concerts by working towards the establishment of a repertoire of musically and morally valuable music beyond short-life fashion. Handel was at the core of this repertoire, which gave him the status of a national institution and made support of the concerts interesting to George III. Also relevant was the social self-positioning of the concerts, which were even more exclusive than the modern series and consciously addressed the aristocracy.³⁴

III. Audience and society

The social positioning of music was an important aspect of musical life, and herein lies another argument not to read the 'modernity' of Haydn's London experience all too readily in the light of our

³³ That is not to say that reasons of the state did not play a role in British court music: The King's Band was only open to British subjects. The Queen's Band, on the other hand, counted Johann Christian Bach, Karl Friedrich Abel, Wilhelm Cramer and Johann Christian Fischer among its members; see Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians* (= footnote 19), p. 43.

³⁴ McVeigh, *Concert Life in London* (= footnote 29), p. 22. On the other hand only a minority of the concert audience consisted of members of the aristocracy; see William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England. A Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology*, Oxford 1992, p. 158f. But Simon McVeigh (*Concert Life in London*) quotes an (ironic) social positioning of concert series in the *Morning Post* (21st January 1789) that locates the Concert of Antient Music below the Professional Concert: 'The Hanover Square [= Professional Concert] – Quality. The Tottenham Street [= Concert of Antient Music] – Gentry. The Freemason's Hall [= Academy of Ancient Music] – people. And the Anacreontic [Society] – folks.' The (relatively) public nature of such events made their function as a social statement somewhat risky, though – see e.g. S.W. Fores' satirical print from 1787, which mocks the thriftiness of the king, who does not organise court concerts, but rather attends the Concert of Antient Music (at which Chancellor of the Exchequer William Pitt plays rattle and fife); see H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn. A Documentary Study*, London 1981, p. 102/illustration 95.

own experiences: The sense in which the subscription concerts were ‘public’ is a very limited one. Ticket prices were high enough to restrict attendance to a tiny minority, and one had to subscribe to a whole (or at least half a) series. On top of that, tickets were only available through personal contact with the impresario and normally could be passed on only within one’s own family, which not only guaranteed social control, but also prevented a black market for the re-selling of tickets. The organisation of the concert series supported their social restrictiveness: ‘Deliberately exclusive with high-priced subscriptions, the weekly series blended elements of the gentlemen’s music society with the salon: Some measure of artistic control was conceded to male patrons through their private previews or an advisory committee; and of social control to female patronesses, involved in vetting audience credentials.’³⁵

‘Benefit concerts’ – single concerts on account of an individual musician – were socially less restrictive. The same applied to the public (in the modern sense) musical performances in the ‘pleasure gardens’ of Vauxhall or Ranelagh – institutions that astonished Haydn (‘the space and the diversity may be unique in the world’ he writes about Vauxhall³⁶) – or to the big oratorio concerts during Lent, which defined /230/ Handel’s role as a national figure. For the popularisation of (art) music, these events were important. But at the heart of the art-music life of the city were Italian opera and subscription concerts, and their social function consisted not least in the exhibition of the affluence and taste of the ‘fashionable society’, the ‘beau monde’, the ‘World’. This circle of a few hundred families was not identical with the ‘nobility’: Even though the nobility made up the biggest proportion, it could also include prominent bankers, merchants, physicians, lawyers, clerics, artists, musicians or cultural entrepreneurs. But it was a circle whose structures geared towards control of access.³⁷ In this context, opera and concert were as much social forums as opportunities for the enjoyment of music, which was an option, but not the main point. As far as the music itself was concerned, the expectation was that it did not just appeal to the ‘learned taste’, but also to an educated, cultivated general public.³⁸

The ‘fashionable society’ was not a court society: It was bigger, and its borders were fuzzier and too dependent on ill-defined processes of self-formation: Whether one belonged to the ‘World’ did not just depend on wealth or rank, but also on ‘a certain je ne say quoy [sic] which other people

³⁵ McVeigh, *An Audience for High-Class Music* (= footnote 25), p. 164.

³⁶ Haydn, 1st London notebook (GBA, p. 495f.).

³⁷ William Weber (‘Musical Culture’ = footnote 25, esp. p. 78) has described the limited size of the ‘World’ through the letters written by Lady Mary Coke (a daughter of the Duke of Argyle) to her sister between 1767 and 1791: Of the more than 350 subscribers to boxes in the King’s Theatre in the 1783 season, three quarters are named at some point in Mary Coke’s letters.

³⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 77-80.

of fashion acknowledge'³⁹, as Lord Chesterfield wrote in 1755, which in some cases could even exclude members of rich aristocratic families. More important than the exact borderlines was that the self-constitution of the 'World' was based on personal relationships. For some social events there were precise dress codes, requiring detailed information, possibly including the requirement to buy clothing from certain outfitters: see, for example, the ball of White's Club in 1789, celebrating the convalescence of George III, which required people to wear what was in effect a uniform, with a 'white sattin [sic] body and petticoat, with a white and gold belt and white and gold bands around the arm', with a cap made from 'white satin with *God Save the King* upon it in gold spangles, and four very high feathers on the other side'. This had to be bought from 'one of three milliners whom their Graces of Rutland, Gordon and Chatham' had determined (all of this from a letter by Lady Louisa Stuart to Lady Portalington, April 1789).⁴⁰ The costs of the right clothing, the right furniture and furnishings, the subscription to the right concert series were ways of keeping the 'World' exclusive; /231/ but knowledge of the rules and access to information and decision-makers were no less important.

The reasons for the emergence of this kind of social elite are not as much the issue here than its place in an urban culture. The sociologist Hans Paul Bahrtdt has described cities as social spaces in which the public and the private sphere move away from each other and weaken the role of institutions and structures that in a village or small town could not be clearly assigned to either and can mediate between public and private life.⁴¹ Anton Zijderfeld, on the other hand, has countered that far into modern times cities had a multiplicity of such mediating institutions and structures, the precursors and starting points of civic society.⁴² Perhaps one can understand the 'World', the 'beau monde' in this sense: as a social structure that, subject to the conditions of the new complexity of the metropolis London, upheld the idea (or fiction) of community: 'The beau monde was a public whose members at least knew of each other, mingling in a closely linked set of social, cultural, and political contexts.'⁴³ In this form of organisation, a society tries to preserve the culture of personal relationships of a court and the clear hierarchies of the traditional social estates,

³⁹ Lord Chesterfield: 'The World by Adam Fitz-Adam', no. 151 (20th November 1755), quoted after Greig, 'Leading the Fashion' (= footnote 23), pp. 293-313, here: p. 296f. It was characteristic for the idea of a 'beau monde' that went beyond the borderlines of social estates (nobility, gentry, clergy, commoners) that the opera houses of London (and Paris) avoided to allocate seating according to estate; see William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste. Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms*, Cambridge 2008, p. 22.

⁴⁰ Lady Louisa Stuart to Lady Portalington, April 1789, quoted in Greig, 'Leading the Fashion' (= footnote 23), p. 307f.

⁴¹ Hans Paul Bahrtdt, *Die moderne Großstadt*, Hamburg 1961, esp. p. 60.

⁴² Anton C. Zijderfeld, *A Theory of Urbanity. The Economic and Civic Culture of Cities*, New Brunswick & London 1998, p. 60-65.

⁴³ Weber, *The Great Transformation* (= footnote 39), p. 21.

but under new circumstances that have begun to dissolve such clarity in the complexity of urban population concentration and the economic ascendancy of trade and industry. The musical star fits into the picture: That one is able to afford him (even if only in the shape of a concert subscription) shows not just wealth and taste, but the idea of elite itself: One (believed one) belonged to the best, and for the best the best was just good enough. If one does not have to pay a musician as a permanent employee, but can hire him seasonally in a subscribers' collective, one can afford internationally leading names.⁴⁴

But it would be too simple to reduce London's musical life around Haydn to this sphere. Neil McKendrick has shown how in 18th-century England the emulation of the lifestyle of 'fashionable society' became a driver of commercialisation⁴⁵, and trickle-down effects not unlike those he describes can also be found in musical matters. London's opera and concert scene was a publicity-prone exception. But it functioned within a commercial framework in which /232/ musical entrepreneurs such as Salomon tried to make money from as many sources as possible, because the audience was so small (and under the circumstances of London fashionable society the size of the audience could not be increased without putting off those who already belonged to it). It stood to reason to apply the elite model on lower levels as well: Similar to the way in which painting was made accessible to a wider circle of buyers through engravings, Salomon published arrangements of Haydn's symphonies for different prospective buyers: versions for flute and string quartet, rather aimed at the better players, and versions for piano trio or four-handed piano for the amateurs.

Beyond such direct musical recycling there were manifold musical institutions and events: the Anacreontic Society, for example, with middle-class roots and a committee of city bankers and merchants, which organised concerts in the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, with professional musicians as performers (and with dinner and the singing of catches and glees to follow the concerts). At most of these concerts between 1787 and 1791 string quartets by Haydn were played, and during his times in London Haydn also attended concerts.⁴⁶ The Anacreontic Society sometimes functioned as a test run for foreign musicians in London, who got their 'stamp of

⁴⁴ The dominance of foreign musicians was specific to London and the subscription series, which transferred the cosmopolitan model of Italian opera to the concert; works by British composers were played only rarely. But that is not typical for English musical life more generally: 'in provincial music societies, prestigious gentlemen's clubs, and a growing number of prominent London concerts [...] [c]omposers such as Arne, Charles Dibdin, William Shield, Samuel Webbe, and John Wall Callcott flourished' (Weber, *The Great Transformation* = footnote 39, p. 59). The high fees paid in London also had effects elsewhere in Europe, because they set a standard for the best musicians that other places could not match; see Weber, 'Musical Culture and the Capital City' [= footnote 25], p. 76.

⁴⁵ McKendrick, Brewer, Plumb, *The Birth of Consumer Society* (= footnote 22), pp. 34-146.

⁴⁶ See H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn. Chronicle and Works*, vol. 3: *Haydn in England, 1791-1795*, London 1976, pp. 41/42, 44 and 115.

approbation' here, before they appeared in front of the 'more fashionable *amateurs*' in the West End, as the *Morning Herald* put it in 1785.⁴⁷ In this way, it can be seen as an example for Zijderfeld's institutions mediating between the private and the public sphere: one of a plethora of societies in 18th-century London (such as the Musical Graduates Society, into which Haydn was accepted in 1791 and into which he introduced Salomon in the summer of 1792). With his accompaniments for Scottish folksongs for two volumes of Napier's collections Haydn also served the fashion for such songs that since William Thompson's *Orpheus Caledonius* (London, ca. 1725) had run rampant in Britain. Such publications were primarily aimed at an urban audience, but were far from the international claims of opera and symphony and had instead begun to discover the internal exotic space of Britain's 'Celtic fringe' – symbolic urban flight at a time when London begins to establish itself as a modern metropolis.

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Conclusion: During his two London sojourns Haydn did not find himself so much in the century of the enlightenment as in the century of the emerging culture industry. The time and circumstances that had made him a European star composer make him more easily imaginable to us than the court employee he had been before, and the same applies to the musical life that needed and made such stars. But the tempting palpability of the /233/ 'Shakespeare of Music'⁴⁸ belies the fact that the new commercial and public musical culture of 18th-century London developed in friction with a society that in many respects was still organised hierarchically, with relatively clearly defined social strata, and the seeming modernity of this historical moment may be less interesting than the specifics of this tense and tantalising situation.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Meredith McFarlane & Simon McVeigh, 'The String Quartet in London, 1769-1799', in: *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. by Susan Wollenberg & Simon McVeigh, Aldershot 2004, pp. 161-196, here p. 173.

⁴⁸ As Haydn was called by the playwright Thomas Holcroft in a note on a card Haydn had sent him in 1794 or 1795; see *GBA*, p. 303/04.