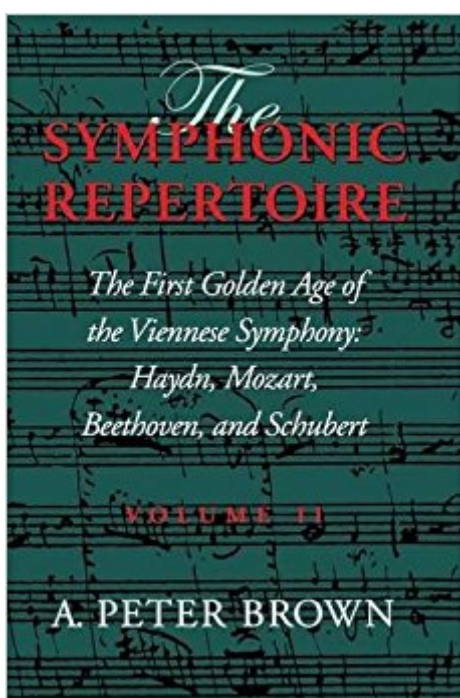


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The Symphonic Repertoire, Vol. 2: The First Golden Age Of The Viennese Symphony: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, And Schubert (Volume II)



Synopsis

Central to the repertoire of Western art music since the 18th century, the symphony has come to be regarded as one of the ultimate compositional challenges. Surprisingly, heretofore there has been no truly extensive, broad-based treatment of the genre, and the best of the existing studies are now several decades old. In this five-volume series, A. Peter Brown explores the symphony from its 18th-century beginnings to the end of the 20th century. Synthesizing the enormous scholarly literature, Brown presents up-to-date overviews of the status of research, discusses any important former or remaining problems of attribution, illuminates the style of specific works and their contexts, and samples early writings on their reception. The Symphonic Repertoire provides an unmatched compendium of knowledge for the student, teacher, performer, and sophisticated amateur. The series is being launched with two volumes on the Viennese symphony. Volume I The First Golden Age of the Viennese Symphony Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert Volume I considers some of the best-known and most universally admired symphonies by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, who created what A. Peter Brown designates as the first golden age of the Viennese symphony during the late 18th and first three decades of the 19th century. The last two dozen symphonies by Haydn, half dozen by Mozart, and three by Schubert, together with Beethoven's nine symphonies became established in the repertoire and provided a standard against which every other symphony would be measured. Most significantly, they imparted a prestige to the genre that was only occasionally rivaled by other cyclic compositions. More than 170 symphonies from this repertoire are described and analyzed in The First Golden Age of the Viennese Symphony, the first volume of the series to appear.

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Customer Reviews

"Though this massive tome may look quite formidable, it proves to be a remarkably smooth read for anyone who already knows much of the literature being addressed. Brown (Indiana Univ. School of Music) covers every symphony composed by the four giants of the First Viennese School, and from a wide variety of perspectives: historical context, structural architecture, nuances of orchestration, critical editions, public response, and reception. The result is a treasure trove of information, scholarly and thorough without being pedantic or boring. The reader most likely to derive maximum pleasure from the book will come armed with scores, recordings, and (of course) prior experience with the works in question. Such a reader will be delighted by the insights Brown provides. Though this is the second volume of a projected five-volume series on the history of the symphony, it is the first to appear in print. If the succeeding volumes are up to the level of this one, music lovers have a great treat in store. Definitely not for beginners. Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above." —E. Schwartz, Bowdoin College, 2003apr CHOICE

A. Peter Brown is Professor of Musicology at Indiana University. He is the author of *Joseph Haydn's Keyboard Music: Sources and Style*, *Performing Haydn's The Creation: Reconstructing the Earliest Renditions*, and other books and articles on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music. He has also prepared editions of scores from this period.

This book, Volume Two of a four book series concerns itself with the history of the Symphony from 1757 to 1828. These dates span the years between the composition of the Haydn's first Symphony and the death of Schubert. These give or take seventy years mark the complete lives of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert (except for Haydn's early years), four of the most important composers in the history of the symphony and four composer who remain popular and much listened to, to this day. The author calls this the first Golden Age of the Viennese Symphony. The second one coming a hundred years later with the works of Brahms, Dvorak, Bruckner, Mahler and Schoenberg according to Brown, though I find it hard to compare these two "Golden Ages" as the times and the music were so different. The book begins with an overview of the Symphony during this time, its performance, its programs, the complement of orchestras, etc. An interesting table shows how many symphonies were performed by different composers in Vienna from 1772 to 1828.

This shows Haydn at the top from 1772-00, tied with Beethoven 1801-10 and Beethoven at the top from 1815-28. Three interesting facts are made clear here, Schubert never makes any of the lists, Mozart only ranks in the period 1780-90, but far behind Haydn, and most interesting to note are composers in the lists that are rarely recorded or listened to now: Dittersdorf, Huber, Wranitzky, Eberl and Krommer. I illustrate this as an example of the type of the interesting information contained in the introduction. The main body of the book is divided into four sections as follows: Haydn - 302 pages (104 Symphonies) Mozart - 111 pages (41 Symphonies) Beethoven - 135 pages (9 Symphonies, plan for tenth and "Wellington's Sieg bei Vittoria") Schubert - 74 pages (6 Symphonies, Draft for N.7, sketches for two) As can be seen, nearly half the book deals with the symphonies of Haydn. Therefore I will concentrate on this section for this review. After a short introduction, there is a discussion on the question of authenticity of the symphonies. An example is Symphony No. 53 which exists in seven different versions, and to which Brown assigns the Number 72. This brings us directly to the next subject, the dates and chronology of the symphonies. More recent scholarship maintains that the number of Symphony No. 72 is actually No. 73. The problem was begun in 1957 with the appearance of the Haydn Works Catalog by Anthony van Hoboken. At this time he assigned numbers to the Haydn Symphonies according to the order he perceived they were composed chronologically. Unfortunately more recent scholarship has proved Hoboken wrong in over half the numbers, especially from the first two thirds of the compositions. This is problematic because all recordings as far as I know, use the old Hoboken Numbers. In some cases these errors are egregious, for example Hoboken's Symphony No. 37 is No. 2 by the new chronology, No. 27 is No. 6, No. 21 is No. 34 and so on. Brown attempts a Chronology on p. 33, but this differs lightly with more recent research. I refer the interested reader to:

<http://www.haydn107.com/index.php?id=22&lng=2> The symphonies are discussed in chronological

groups I. Symphonies before 1761 = 14 II. Symphonies before 1761 to ca. 1763 = 8 III. Early

Esterhazy Symphonies 1761-1765 = 17 IV. Esterhazy Symphonies ca. 1766-1772 = 16 V.

Symphonies for Prince Esterhazy and Public Consumption ca. 1772 to ca. 1782 = 22 VI.

Symphonies 1782-1784 = 6 VII. Six "Paris" Symphonies 1785-1786 = 6 VIII. Two Symphonies for

Tost and Three More for Paris 1787-1789 = 5 IX and X. Twelve Symphonies for London = 12 Each

Symphony in these ten groups is discussed individually, some briefly and some in more detail.

Some information is given on the history of each Symphony and for those interested the origin of the

names of all 33 "Named" Symphonies are given. For those with a musicological background or

those who can read music, information is presented on the structure of the compositions. This part

will not be understandable to laypersons, but that does not mean the book is not usable by the

interested listener. There is much to learn here. The sections on Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert follow a similar approach. The section on notes and the bibliography are extensive. The general index is very helpful and there is also an index of works by composer. It is interesting to ponder as to who will buy and use this book. It seems it would make a very good textbook, but it would not be of much use for the casual listener as it is too technical and it is only really helpful if the listener has all the Symphonies in the book at their disposal. For a trained musician or musicologist it could be of use as a general reference or for the bibliography. For the serious listener it's likely to be of great use. I read the entire section on Haydn while listening to the Symphonies discussed which took me over a year. I came away learning a lot and having a deeper appreciation of Haydn's music and a deeper understanding of symphonic music. It is not a cheap book, but one that is full of interesting information, well written, well presented, well bound and printed and from the looks of it designed for regular use. I purchased my copy in January 2006 and use it fairly regularly. I can recommend it very highly. Money well spent. Review by Walter O. Koenig

Excellent resource for the musician, scholar or student! Well researched and compiled, should be a staple of the serious musician's library.

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