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Harry Christophers & Handel and Haydn Society

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BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

COR16113



## HAYDN Symphonies Nos. 6 *Le matin* and 82 *L'ours* Violin Concerto in G major

Harry Christophers & Handel and Haydn Society  
Aisslinn Nosky violin

*"This performance has all the attributes that display this music at its best."*

GRAMOPHONE

COR16139



## HAYDN Symphonies Nos. 7 *Le midi* and 83 *La poule* Violin Concerto in C major

Harry Christophers & Handel and Haydn Society  
Aisslinn Nosky violin

*"...combines the authenticity of period instruments with the interpretive skills of H+H artistic director Harry Christophers...cheery and sunlit, with breezy conversation and the occasional hunting horn."* THE BOSTON GLOBE

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SOCIETY



# HAYDN

Symphony No. 8 *Le soir*  
Symphony No. 84

Violin Concerto in A major

Harry Christophers  
Handel and Haydn Society  
Aisslinn Nosky violin

One of the many delights of being Artistic Director of America's oldest continuously performing arts organisation, the Handel and Haydn Society (H+H), is that I am given the opportunity to present most of our concert season at Boston's glorious Symphony Hall. Built in 1900, it is principally the home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, but it has been our primary performance home since 1900 as well, and it is considered by many, with some justification I would add, to be one of the finest concert halls in the world. It is that classic 'shoebox style' reminiscent of the Musikverein in Vienna; the acoustics are quite superb and, despite its size – c.2500 capacity, perfect for playing on period instruments.



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

On this live recording, we present a programme devoted to that master of the symphony, Franz Joseph Haydn, where you can witness first-hand the development from his early symphony *Le soir* to his much later Paris Symphony No. 84. The first concert I ever gave with H+H was at the Esterházy Palace in Eisenstadt in August 2006, where we performed *Le soir* in the Haydnssaal on the very stage Haydn first presented it to his new employer, Prince Paul Anton Esterházy, under the ceiling paintings of *Le matin*, *Le midi* and *Le soir* – a very clever way for Haydn to impress his new employer. These are very much *concertante* symphonies with the flutes, bassoon, violin, cello and violone taking centre stage. Thirty years later and Haydn's fame had spread across Europe. Although he was still employed at court, Parisians in particular had taken Haydn's music to their hearts. Symphony No. 84 shows just how much his symphonies had transformed from those early years, both in orchestral size and in individuality. Not only is it an incredible fusion of grace, brilliance and warmth but it also contains one of the most striking wind band solos in all of his Paris symphonies – perhaps this was a tribute to the excellence of the French orchestra?

We also continue our cycle of Haydn's violin concertos with our inspirational concertmaster, Aisslinn Nosky, at the helm. They were not even published until the 20th century and sadly are still seldom performed. Here we redress that, this time with his A major concerto. Aisslinn's stylistic awareness and her inventiveness is a constant delight and inspiration to us all and her rendition certainly brings Haydn's intentions to life.

I feel very privileged to have taken this august Society into its Bicentennial; yes, the Handel and Haydn Society was founded in 1815. Handel was the old, Haydn the new (he had just died in 1809), and what we can do is continue to perform the music of the past but strip away the cobwebs and reveal it anew. This recording of music by Haydn was made possible by individuals who are inspired by the work of the Handel and Haydn Society. Our sincere thanks go to all of them.

Harry  
Aisslinn

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*"This release is well worth having, especially as it offers as fine a tonal sound as I have ever heard in a recording of period instruments."*

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW  
on Haydn Symphonies Nos. 6 & 82  
(COR16113)

*"[Aisslinn Nosky's] greatest gift as a violinist is her ability to play with a singing quality, a style that befits Haydn's music."*

Aaron Keebaugh  
BOSTON CLASSICAL REVIEW

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**This recording has been made possible through the generous support of the following:**

Peacewoods Charitable Fund

Peter G. Manson & Peter A. Durfee

## JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

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### Symphony No. 8 in G major, Hob.I/8 *Le soir*

①	Allegro molto	6.01
②	Andante	12.20
③	Menuetto & Trio	4.00
④	La tempesta: Presto	4.47

### Violin Concerto in A major, Hob.VIIa/3

Aisslinn Nosky *violin & leader*

⑤	Moderato	12.16
⑥	Adagio	6.03
⑦	Finale: Allegro	6.10

### Symphony No. 84 in E flat major, Hob.I/84

⑧	Largo – Allegro	7.43
⑨	Andante	7.31
⑩	Menuet & Trio: Allegretto	3.25
⑪	Finale: Vivace	6.04
	Total running time	76.31

## JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

Symphony No. 8 in G major, Hob.I/8 *Le soir*

Violin Concerto in A major, Hob.VIIa/3

Symphony No. 84 in E flat major, Hob.I/84

When Haydn joined the service of Prince Paul Anton Esterházy in 1761, his post as Vice-Kapellmeister carried very clearly defined duties, one of which was ‘to compose such pieces of music as his Serene Princely Highness may command’ for performance at his palatial residences in Vienna and at Eisenstadt, some 25 miles outside the city. In effect, this meant that while the ageing Kapellmeister, Gregor Joseph Werner, looked after the church music, Haydn’s job was to write for and direct a small orchestra recently recruited from among the ranks of Vienna’s freelance players. Haydn himself had formerly made a living in this way, and many members of the band were his friends. One can

readily imagine the easy-going composer enjoying a pleasantly relaxed working relationship with the musicians under his command, even if we did not know that in 1765 the jealous, increasingly marginalised Werner wrote to the Prince to complain about ‘the lazy idleness of the whole band, the principal responsibility for which must be laid at the door of the present director, who lets them get away with everything, so as to receive the name of a good Heyden.’

Happier evidence, though, is provided by the fact that ‘Heyden’ was raised to the Kapellmeister’s job on Werner’s death in 1766, and also by the music he had already written for the ensemble,

which includes concertos for the violinist Luigi Tomasini, the cellist Joseph Weigl, the double-bass player Johann Georg Schwenda, the flautist Franz Sigl, and the horn-players Johann Knoblauch and Thaddeus Steinmüller. In addition, several of the symphonies of the early 1760s made a point of providing these talented musicians with solo passages, many of which have something of the air of private jokes. These symphonies include the popular trilogy *Le matin* (Morning), *Le midi* (Midday) and *Le soir* (Evening), believed to have been first performed at the Prince's palace in Vienna in May or June 1761 and thus among the very first works Haydn composed for him.

The titles were Haydn's own, their use of French a nod to modish affectation. The implied pictorial element is not followed through with any great degree of consistency (most of it being contained in the sunrise and bird-music of the first movement of *Le matin*), but the solo interventions remain a constant. The

first movement of *Le midi*, after a stately opening for full orchestra, features suave solos for two violins and cello, a combination recalling the *concerto grosso* tradition of the earlier part of the century, and reminding us that the Esterházy music library contained quite a few works by composers of the Italian baroque. The second movement is among the most striking in these early symphonies, a lugubrious operatic scene with the violin spinning wordless recitatives over a sympathetic accompaniment, then embarking on a pseudo-aria, supported by a cello and a pair of flutes making a late but telling arrival in the piece. There is also an elaborate cadenza for the violin and cello just before the end. Haydn had written no operas at this stage in his career, but this movement is a good early advertisement for his talent (and as H.C. Robbins Landon has pointed out, displays the flavour of the Elysian music from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, a year before that work was composed). The Menuetto is conventionally polite and courtly, keeping back the fun of an extended

double bass solo for the central Trio section, and the bustling Finale returns us to the *concerto grosso*-like texture of the first movement, this time with added flute solos.

Paul Anton died in 1762, to be succeeded by his brother Nicolaus. Nicolaus turned out to be a sympathetic employer, and when Haydn's contract as Kapellmeister came up for renewal in 1779 a small change was made that was to have a profound effect on his fortunes. Previously, anything Haydn composed became the exclusive property of the Prince, but from now on this would no longer be the case. The concession not only bestowed official recognition on Haydn's growing international reputation, it also enabled him to profit from it for the first time by selling his works abroad, where they were already known and admired through unauthorised publications and performances from which he had received little or no income. Ultimately it would lead to the triumphs of the London visits of the 1790s, but

for the time being Haydn was happy to work from Austria, maintaining an astute business correspondence with publishers and patrons in Vienna, London and Paris.

It was from the last of these cities that, in the mid-1780s, he received the most prestigious commission of his career so far: six symphonies for one of Paris's most important and fashionable concert societies, the *Concert de la Loge Olympique*. Haydn's music had been enjoyed in Paris for 20 years by the time the commission came, and his high standing among his French admirers is shown by the fact that his fee was 25 *louis d'or* for each symphony, an unusually high figure which the composer himself was said to have found 'colossal'. The symphonies (Nos. 82–87) were written during 1785 and 1786, and supplied in time for performance during the 1787 season. Their premieres must have been quite a spectacle: the orchestra wore sky-blue coats with fancy ruffles and dress swords, and the performances were directed by Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the West Indian-born

violinist, composer and swordsman whose eventful career pretty much sums up the difference between the respective musical *milieux* of fashionable Paris and the semi-feudal surroundings of the Esterházy palaces.

The six 'Paris' symphonies were received with great acclaim: 'beautiful of character and astonishing in craftsmanship ... Haydn's name resounds to their extraordinary merit', wrote the *Mercure de France*. They were indeed Haydn's finest symphonies for more than a decade, blending an approachable and popular style with an inventiveness and broad emotional range that revealed new possibilities in what was still a relatively youthful genre. Parisian orchestras were generally larger than the little band Haydn was used to back at the Esterházy court – the Loge Olympique's orchestra enjoyed the services of 40 violins and 10 double basses – and it seems likely that the rich expressiveness of the new works was inspired not only by the composer's growing awareness of his respected

position in the musical world, but also by the thought of a large ensemble in action.

The slow introduction to Symphony No. 84 is certainly imposing, but is eventually pushed aside by the main body of the movement, an Allegro that is both intellectually strong (it is staunchly monothematic) and full of characteristic Haydnesque bonhomie. The second movement is a set of three variations on a simple but graceful theme; the wind instruments do not enter until Variation 3, at the end of which the music opens up to allow them a deliciously intertwining concerto-like cadenza, accompanied by pizzicato strings. The Menuet has a cheerfully rugged feel by comparison (though its progress is far from predictable), and the Symphony ends with a dashing Finale which, while not outright 'jokey', delights in teasing the listener with dynamic changes and strange distractions.

Haydn's concertos do not occupy quite the same crucial position in his output

as do his symphonies and string quartets. The latter were nothing less than central to the development both of Haydn as an artist and, by extension, of Western music itself, but the concertos marked no such progress, the burden of the genre's status as the most popular instrumental form of the previous 50 years proving rather hard, perhaps, for their composer to shake off. As a result, Haydn's output of concertos – most of which dates from the 1760s – is small and comparatively conservative, for all its charm seemingly content with adopting the received and trusted formal procedures of the Baroque.

The A major Violin Concerto, Hob.VIIa/3, is a good example of Haydn's early concerto style, Classical in melodic outline but with structural and gestural similarities – in particular a steady momentum and basic unity of mood within each movement – to the concertos of Vivaldi and other Baroque Italians still familiar in Austria at the time. The demandingly high-lying nature of the solo line resembles that of the better-known C major Violin Concerto (Hob.

VIIa/1, already recorded by the Handel and Haydn Society on CORO 16139), suggesting that, like that work, this one was composed for Luigi Tomasini, the Pesaro-born violinist who had joined the Esterházy orchestra in 1761 at the age of 20 and quickly risen to the position of leader. (He also became a close friend of Haydn, who stood as godfather to several of his children, and doubtless also played an important part in the performance and development of the composer's string quartets.) That the A major is laid out on a more spacious scale than the C major may imply that it is the later of the two, as also might the generally tighter motivic working of its melodic material. The first two movements are typically well-crafted in this regard, though they perhaps do not reach the same level of musical inspiration as their counterparts in the C major. The finale, however, combines convincing musical interplay with something of the spirit and dash of Haydn's best concertos.

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# Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra

Harry Christophers Artistic Director

## VIOLIN I

Aisslinn Nosky \*  
*Concertmaster Chair*  
*funded by Rhoda & Paul Joss*

Susanna Ogata

Abigail Karr

Adriane Post

Julie Leven

Jane Starkman

Tatiana Daubek

## VIOLIN II

Christina Day Martinson §  
Fiona Hughes §

*Dr. Lee Bradley III Chair*

Katherine Winterstein

Guiomar Turgeon

Clayton Hoener

Lena Wong

Julia McKenzie

## VIOLA

Max Mandel §  
*Chair funded in memory*  
*of Estah & Robert Yens*

Jenny Stirling

David Miller

Anne Black

## CELLO

Guy Fishman §  
*Nancy & Richard Lubin Chair*

Sarah Freiberg

Colleen McGary-Smith

Michael Unterman

## BASS

Robert Nairn §  
*Amelia Peabody Chair*

Heather Miller Lardin

## FLUTE

Christopher Krueger §

## OBOE

Stephen Hammer §  
*Chair funded in part by*  
*Dr. Michael Fisher Sandler*  
Debra Nagy

## BASSOON

Andrew Schwartz §  
Marilyn Boenau

## HORN

Todd Williams §  
*Grace & John Neises Chair*  
Elisabeth Axtell

## FORTEPIANO

Ian Watson

\* = concertmaster § = principal

# Harry Christophers

Appointed Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society (H+H) in 2008, Harry Christophers began his tenure with the 2009-2010 Season and has conducted H+H each season since September 2006, when he led a sold-out performance in the Esterházy Palace at the Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria. Leading up to the organization's 2015 Bicentennial, Christophers and H+H embarked on an ambitious artistic journey with a showcase of works premiered in the United States by H+H since 1815, education programming, community outreach activities and partnerships, and the release of a series of recordings on the CORO label.

Christophers is known internationally as founder and conductor of the UK-based choir and period instrument orchestra The Sixteen. He has directed The Sixteen throughout Europe, America, and the Asia-Pacific region, gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, baroque, and 20th- and 21st-century



Photograph: Stu Rosner

music. In 2000 he instituted The Choral Pilgrimage, a tour of British cathedrals from York to Canterbury. He has recorded over 140 titles for which he has won numerous awards, including a Grand Prix du Disque, numerous Preise der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik (German Record Critics Awards), the coveted Gramophone Award for Early Music, and the prestigious Classical Brit Award (2005) for his disc entitled *Renaissance*. In 2009 he

received one of classical music's highest accolades, the Classic FM Gramophone Awards Artist of the Year Award; The Sixteen also won the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel *Coronation Anthems*, a CD that also received a 2010 Grammy Award nomination.

Harry Christophers is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Granada

Symphony Orchestra and a regular guest conductor with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. He is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and has Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Canterbury Christ Church and Leicester. He was awarded a CBE in the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours.

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## Handel and Haydn Society

The Handel and Haydn Society (H+H) is internationally acclaimed for its performances of baroque and classical music. Based in Boston, H+H's Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus delight more than 50,000 listeners each year with a nine-concert subscription series at Symphony Hall and other leading venues in addition to a robust program of



Photograph: Kyle T. Hemmingway

intimate events in museums, schools, and community centres. Under the

leadership of Artistic Director Harry Christophers, the ensemble embraces historically informed performance, bringing classical music to life with the same immediacy it had the day it was written. Through the Karen S. and George D. Levy Education Program, H+H also provides engaging, accessible, and broadly inclusive music education to over 10,000 children each year through in-school music instruction and a Vocal Arts Program that includes six youth choruses.

Founded in Boston in 1815, H+H is the oldest continuously-performing arts organisation in the United States, and is unique among American ensembles for its longevity, capacity for reinvention, and distinguished history of premieres. H+H began as a choral society founded by middle-class Bostonians who aspired to improve the quality of singing in their growing American city. They named the organisation after two composers

– Handel and Haydn – to represent both the old music of the 18th century and what was then the new music of the 19th century. In the first decades of its existence, H+H gave the US premieres of Handel's *Messiah* (1818), Haydn's *The Creation* (1819), Verdi's *Requiem* (1878), and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (1879). Between 2014 and 2016, H+H celebrated its Bicentennial with two seasons of special concerts and initiatives to mark two centuries of music making. Since its founding, H+H has given more than 2,000 performances before a total audience exceeding 2.8 million.

In addition to its subscription series, tours, and broadcast performances, H+H reaches a worldwide audience through ambitious recordings including the critically acclaimed Haydn *The Creation*, the best-selling *Joy to the World: An American Christmas*, and Handel *Messiah*, recorded live at Symphony Hall under Christophers' direction.

Aisslinn Nosky  
*violin & leader*



Photograph: Kyle T. Hemingway

Canadian violinist Aisslinn Nosky was appointed Concertmaster of the Handel and Haydn Society in 2011. With a reputation for being one of the most dynamic and versatile violinists of her

generation, Nosky is in great demand internationally as a director, soloist and chamber music collaborator. She has appeared with Holland Baroque, the Utah Symphony, the Staunton Music

Festival, the Calgary Philharmonic, La Jolla Summerfest, and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra.

Aisslinn is also a member of I FURIOSI Baroque Ensemble. For over 15 years this innovative Canadian ensemble has presented its own edgy and inventive concert series in Toronto and toured Europe

and North America turning new audiences on to baroque music. With the Eybler Quartet, Nosky explores repertoire from the first century of the string quartet literature on period instruments. From 2005-2016, Aisslinn was a member of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and toured and appeared as soloist with this internationally renowned ensemble.

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DESIGN: Andrew Giles – discoyd@aegidius.org.uk



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