

## Author's Note

*The Farewell Symphony* is a true story. The events in this book are based on documented evidence, and the characters—Prince Nicholas, Haydn, Tomasini, and the other musicians—really did exist.

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) spent nearly thirty years working for Prince Nicholas of Esterházy (1714-1790). Documents from that period, now held in the Esterházy archives and various European libraries, reveal the composer's many activities at court. Haydn composed music as requested by the prince and was responsible for the care of all music and instruments. Haydn's contract, dated 1765, required him to behave and dress as an officer in a princely court and to serve as an example to the other musicians. The composer was a kind music director, and he soon earned the nickname "Papa Haydn."

Archival documents from 1772 reveal various events that have been included in *The Farewell Symphony*. Descriptions are given of outdoor festivities, masked balls, special theatrical performances, concerts, elaborate ballet and opera productions, and the arrival of guests. Even the repair of musical instruments is documented. A pay sheet from 1772 lists twenty-three musicians (including Haydn and several singers), and a list written in Haydn's own hand keeps track of his many compositions. Haydn's letters to the prince reflect his role as a spokesman for the musicians. In one message, dated 1772, Haydn wrote: "I have communicated today to all the musicians by word of mouth your high order . . . that none of the wives and children of the musicians . . . are allowed to be seen at Esterháza. There was no one who did not agree to the terms of that high order."

The first performance of Haydn's Symphony No. 45 in F-sharp minor was probably quite similar to the performance described in this book. The original music (now in Budapest) indicates when each musician is to stop playing and leave the room. Records also show that Prince Nicholas and his musicians left Esterháza shortly after the symphony's premiere.

History rarely preserves the personal details that bring a story to life. Consequently, the personalities and emotions of the characters have been enhanced by my imagination. Also, the interpretation of the symphony, as experienced by Prince Nicholas, is based on my personal response to the music.