

presented another series of concerts with Salomon, including the premieres of his Symphonies Nos. 99–101. No. 101 was first performed under Haydn's direction at the Hanover Square Concert Rooms on March 3, 1794.

The first movement's opening is dramatic and hushed. When the tempo speeds to Presto, it is in a lively, rollicking 6/8 meter (very unusual for the first movement of a symphony).

The symphony's nickname comes from the "tick-tock" accompaniment that pervades much of the second movement (Andante). Bassoons and pizzicato strings provide the tick-tock at first, accompanying a graceful, slightly coy tune. There is a stormy interlude at the movement's center; then the tick-tock returns, this time played by the flute and bassoon two octaves apart.

With the third movement, probably the longest and most complex of Haydn's minuet movements, the symphony's nickname becomes doubly appropriate. Back in 1793 in Vienna, Haydn had given his patron Prince Esterházy the gift of an elaborate musical clock, for which he also wrote a set of 12 short pieces; one of those 12 pieces became the basis for this grand, ceremonious movement. The slightly comical trio section seems to evoke a not-very-talented village band, whose "wrong" notes and other quirks were often "corrected" by the symphony's later conductors and publishers. This trio may have provided some inspiration for Beethoven in a similar passage in the third movement of his "Pastoral" Symphony almost 15 years later.

The Finale is based on a lively tune that is subjected to a very complex development, even including a vigorous fugue at one point. As is characteristic of the London symphonies, the string section is called upon to play some extraordinarily difficult passages.

Haydn Symphony No. 94 "Surprise" *Symphony No. 101 "Clock"*

Pierre Monteux • The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra



Surprise Symphony, byname of Symphony No. 94 in G Major, orchestral work by Austrian composer Joseph Haydn, so named for the “surprise”—a startlingly loud chord—that interrupts the otherwise soft and gentle flow of the second movement. The distinctive feature did not appear in the original score. Rather, it was added by the composer on a whim for the piece’s London premiere on March 23, 1792, and was retained in later performances.

For most of his career, which spanned primarily the second half of the 18th century, Haydn served as music director for the court of the Hungarian Esterházy family. With the death of Prince Miklós József Esterházy in 1790, Haydn was finally free to travel, and he set out for England, spurred by an invitation from Johann Peter Salomon, a German-born violinist and impresario, who presented six months of concerts in London each year. Knowing of the popularity of his Austrian friend’s works, Salomon was eager to present Haydn and his music in concert.

Haydn arrived in London on New Year’s Day, 1791, and remained in the city for a year and a half. Londoners turned out by the thousands to watch him conduct premieres of his new works, and critics and audiences alike were generous with their praise. In his diary entries during these tours, Haydn exulted in his local celebrity, the attendance at his concerts, the frequent dinner invitations, and the impressive concert receipts. He returned for a second 18-month visit in 1794–95.

Among the works heard at these concerts were 12 new symphonies, the last ones Haydn ever wrote, including the perennially popular Symphony No. 94 in G Major. The piece gained fame when the composer himself, while serving as conductor, impulsively altered the dynamics of the second movement. There has been much speculation on the reason behind the change. According to one account, Haydn had already given the downbeat to begin the movement when the gentle snores of a front-row patron piqued his sense of humour. He and his musicians

forged ahead with the little theme until reaching its final chord, for which Haydn cued an immense fortissimo (loud tone), bringing the drowsy patron to his feet. Whatever Haydn’s motivation, the episode ultimately earned for the work its everlasting nickname, Surprise Symphony—in English. In German it is known as the symphony mit dem Paukenschlag—that is, “with the drum stroke,” an equally apt sobriquet.

Beyond such colourful anecdotes, the four-movement symphony follows a structure that was, at the time, still considered novel: it begins with a generally lively movement that offers several contrasting melodies; the second movement proceeds at a gentler pace, though with the moment of “surprise”; and the third movement is dance-flavoured, specifically resembling the then-popular minuet, a predecessor of the waltz. The last movement is the liveliest of all, with brisk and scurrying ideas that bring the piece to an energetic conclusion. Such a pattern became the norm for symphonies in the decades that followed, largely due to the initiative and stature of Haydn himself. He pioneered the structure, and his popularity was such that other composers, including Mozart and Beethoven, chose his work as their model for how a symphony should be composed.

After the overwhelming success of his first London trip in 1791–2, Haydn returned to Vienna, where he bought a new house for his family and settled into a comfortable domestic life, while continuing to compose and giving some music lessons (including a few to the young Beethoven). But the lure of the excitement he had experienced in England was strong, and when Johann Peter Salomon invited him to return to London for some more concerts, Haydn didn’t hesitate. He arrived in England in February 1794, and over the next few months

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Symphony No. 94 In G ("Surprise")

1 First Movement: Adagio Cantabile; Vivace Assai 6:28

2 Second Movement: Andante 5:40

3 Third Movement: Minuet: Allegro Molto 5:08

4 Fourth Movement: Allegro Di Molto 3:29

Symphony No. 101 In D ("Clock")

5 First Movement: Adagio; Presto 8:54

6 Second Movement: Andante 6:07

7 Third Movement: Minuet: Allegretto 6:36

8 Fourth Movement: Vivace 4:17

Producer - John Culshaw Engineer - James Brown

Recorded by the Decca for RCA 1960



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