PIONEERING HAYDN ON RECORD

An occasional series dedicated to commercial and live recordings of Haydn symphonies up to and including those of the first two complete cycles by Ernst Märzendorfer and Antal Dorati

by Christopher Howell

Symphony no. 6 in D major Hob. I/6 "Le Matin" (1761 or earlier)

Haydn's Symphonies 6-8 marked the beginning of his employment at the Esterházy Court. As usually told, the nickname "Le Matin", arising presumably from an introduction that could plausibly depict the sunrise, no more derived from Haydn himself than any of the other names attached to his symphonies. It was applied early on, however, and as a consequence the following two symphonies were named "Le Midi" and "Le Soir". They are often played – and recorded – as a sequence though they have no specific programmatic content beyond the storm which closes "Le Soir". A different story comes from Albert Christoph Dies (1755-1822), who visited Haydn a number of times in his final years and left a detailed account of his visits[1]. According to Dies, Haydn told him that the Prince himself had suggested a cycle of works based on the phases of the day. However, by this time Haydn's health and memory were failing. He spoke to Dies of a cycle of four string quartets based on the *Tageszeiten*, though the only works in his catalogue that bear some resemblance to this description are the three symphonies. Still, it is more likely that the ageing composer was remembering imperfectly something that had happened, rather than inventing or imagining something that had not.

Even without the programmatic links, there would be some justification for playing the three symphonies as a group since they are all three what a later generation might have called Concertos for Orchestra. Evidently wishing to start on the right foot with his players, Haydn gave each of them at least one challenging solo spot including, in no. 6, a duet for bassoon and violone. Robbins Landon's score suggests the latter should be taken by the double bass unless, presumably, you have a reconstructed violone available, which some more recent period instrument ensembles may have. Either way, it will sound an octave below score pitch. However, the old Breitkopf edition indicated a solo cello and most earlier recordings follow this. The Robbins Landon score was published in 1965, though the American scholar made his expertise available earlier, for example to Max Goberman whose recording, made before 1962, uses the double bass.

A curious feature of the first movement is the way in which the horn, preparatory to the recapitulation, anticipates the arpeggio-based main theme, almost exactly as Beethoven was to do in the "Eroica" Symphony. "Almost" because Haydn does not do this against "wrong" harmonies. This – and likewise the resemblance of the theme to that in the last movement of Beethoven's own "programme" symphony, the "Pastoral" – is presumably one of music's strange coincidences. It seems unlikely that Beethoven would have had access to Haydn's works dating back four decades.

The body of the second movement, which has an *Adagio* introduction and a thematically related *Adagio conclusion*, is an *Andante* in 3/4 time. An obvious problem for interpreters of this symphony is how to avoid the impression that it has two minuets, since the *Andante*, with its staccato crotchets in the lower strings, sounds very like one.

[1] *Biographische Nachrichten von Joseph Haydn*. An English translation by Vernon Gotwals was published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 1968.

Given the connection between these three symphonies, I considered grouping them together in a single article. However, in the earlier days of recording quite a few conductors played just one of them, so I felt it would be clearer to treat them separately.

The earliest recording of no. 6 seems to be that by the Bamberg SO under **Hans Weisbach**, issued in the USA by Mercury (MG 10079) in 1950. They did not record the other two symphonies. Weisbach (1885-1961) was celebrated particularly for his Bach and Bruckner, but he made early recordings of Haydn's 92nd and 97th Symphonies with the LSO in 1932. He directs an attractive account of this symphony with alert playing, lively tempi in the outer movements and expressive handling of the slower ones. His soloists are mainly good, but the solo violin intonation is dodgy at times. The bassoon is rather too far back in his duet with the cello in the third movement trio. In the finale, I felt the evident size of the full orchestra contrasted rather clumsily with the graceful solo contributions. There is a harpsichord continuo. Not much is heard of it but it adds a pleasing freshness to the sound here and there. In the first, second and fourth movements, first repeats only are played[2]. Not perfect, but a reasonable start to the symphony's recorded history.

Soon after this came the version by the Vienna Chamber orchestra conducted by **Franz Litschauer**. Set down in July 1950, this was a Boston Haydn Society issue (HSLP 1025, Nixa HLP 1047 in the UK) and went one up on Weisbach by recording the entire trilogy for the first time. No. 6 shared a disc with no. 21, 7 and 8 came together. The Austrian conductor Franz Litschauer (1903-1972) was the founder (in 1946) and first conductor (until 1952) of the Kammerorchester der Wiener Konzerthausgesellschaft. During this period he made a number of recordings with this and other Viennese orchestras. Thereafter he mainly conducted abroad. In 1959 he founded the Cairo Symphony Orchestra but remained only for a year, moving to the National Radio Foundation orchestra of Greece in 1960. Here, too, he remained only a year, after which he appeared as guest conductor, though concrete traces of his work are hard to come by. Perhaps the disc of Haydn 6 is hard to come by, too. My only chance to hear it came through Internet Archive, which has transferred a scratchy copy with numerous jumping grooves in the first two movements. Score in hand, I got some idea of his interpretation, but I recommend interested listeners to wait until something better is found.

Litschauer has superior soloists, especially the violin. The bassoon is more present in the trio and the duet with the cello is nicely managed. The alternating solo and *tutti* passages in the finale share the same problem as the Weisbach version – the full strings are too big-sounding. The solo cello could have played out more in this movement. Litschauer obtains a feeling of freshness without excessive speed in the outer movements, which have their first repeats. He is imaginative in the second movement, the *Adagio* portions of which he takes very slowly and atmospherically. The *Andante*, by dint of very delicate accompanying by the lower strings and flexible playing of the solo violin, sounds less like a minuet while the minuet itself is, by contrast, a rather ceremonial affair. It seems slow, but it is difficult to imagine the trio sounding effective at a faster tempo. Given that this recording was made under the auspices of the Boston Haydn society, I might have expected a double bass in the trio, but Litschauer has a cello. This recording would be worth revival if a decent copy could be found for the transfer. *The Record Guide*, notorious for its one-word dismissals of recordings that have subsequently become classics, lavished uncharacteristic praise on it: "The symphony, conducted with intelligence and love, is well recorded and would certainly have received two stars but for some sense of oppression in the tuttis"[3]. A harpsichord is named on the sleeve – Christa Fuhrmann. I cannot say I noticed her presence and would have thought that, if ever there were a case for the *cembalo* improvising a quiet little something, it would be around the single staccato string chords

[2] In the old Breitkopf score, which Weisbach presumably used, the second repeat of the first movement is not indicated. All the others are.

[3] E. Sackville-West, D. Shawe-Taylor with A. Porter, W. Mann: revised edition, Collins 1955, pp.349-50.

punctuating the various stages of the second movement. First repeats are played in the outer movements, none in the *Andante*.

Nothing further came along until **Max Goberman** began his massive project, aborted by death, to record all Haydn's symphonies with a slimmed-down Vienna State Opera Orchestra. On the CBS issue, at least, the trilogy was still split over two discs, no. 6 with nos. 4 and 5, 7 and 8 on a single LP. The violin and cello soloists were Ludwig Dobrony and Gerhard Zatchek – it would be nice to know who the other soloists were.

Goberman follows Robbins Landon's advice over double-dotting in the introduction, but is curiously unatmospheric, as though he wishes us to hear this as purely abstract music. Likewise his *Allegro* is nimble and lively but lacking Litschauer's feeling of early morning freshness. There are occasional hints of a harpsichord in this movement, after which the player seemingly packs up and goes home. The second movement is delicately played but without the expressivity of Litschauer's soloists. Goberman's minuet is a little more gentle than Litschauer's, at about the same speed. This should be to the good, but Litschauer did manage greater contrast with the previous *Andante.* The trio, with a double bass at last, goes nicely though again with a certain rigidity. In the finale, Goberman's smaller forces find a better balance between solos and *tuttis*, but again the overall impression is of a brisk efficiency. First repeats in the outer movements, none in the second[4].

Symphonies 6-8 first appeared on a single LP in the performances by the Sarre Chamber Orchestra under their founder **Karl Ristenpart**. Set down in January and February 1963, they were originally made for the Club Français du Disque (303) and issued in France in 1963. The LP was taken up by Nonesuch a couple of years later and was a notable success[5]. Ristenpart does not trouble with double dotting in the introduction and, like Goberman, builds it up strongly rather than poetically. The following *Allegro* is swift but has more *joi de vivre* than Goberman's. The second movement treats the opening and closing *Adagios* gravely, but Ristenpart takes a brisk tempo for the *Andante*, which sounds more like a minuet than ever. The solo violin, Georg Friedrich Hendel, sounds uncomfortable, not because he cannot play the notes at this speed – he is technically impeccable – but because he does not have the space to express the music as freely as those under Litschauer and Goberman. The minuet is also on the fast side, possibly to its benefit but to the detriment of the bucolic humour of the trio. The cello solo – the old Breitkopf edition is used – is neatly done by Betty Hindrichs – the bassoon soloist is not named[6]. The finale has plenty of energy and, again, a little more verve than Goberman. First repeats in the outer movements, none in the *Andante*.

There was not an immediate rush to compete with Ristenpart's single-disc issue. Anyone wishing to take slower tempi, or to play more repeats, would have had to wait for technology to catch up with them. I am not insinuating, by the way, that Ristenpart deliberately took fast tempi for this reason – he could presumably opted for fewer repeats if a single disc issue was considered essential. Leslie Jones and the Little Orchestra of London recorded just no. 6 in 1965, coupling it with Symphonies 13 and 64 (Pye GSGC 14045). When Jones's Pye discs were taken up by Nonesuch, they recoupled them to eliminate no. 6, presumably because they already had Ristenpart's trilogy in their catalogue. I have not been able to hear the Jones performance.

[4] As said elsewhere in these articles, Goberman almost certainly made the repeats, which were removed by the engineers for reasons of space.
[5] The 1966 EMG *Art of Record Buying* listed it with its maximum two stars.
[6] Hendel and Hindrichs were husband and wife and section leaders of the Sarre Chamber Orchestra until 1970, when they died together in a car crash.

Also in 1965, from 26 to 29 July, the Hungarian Chamber Orchestra led by **Vilmos Tátrai**[7], recorded the trilogy, but coupled no. 7 with no. 49, nos. 6 and 8 appearing together (Qualiton LPX 1241). No double-dotting in the introduction, but the crescendo is handled with considerable poetry. When the *Allegro* starts, the phrasing of the unnamed flautist is so captivating that one realizes only later how swiftly they are going. There is wonderful vitality here. They also make much of the mysterious passage in the development where, after a sudden drop to *piano,* the violins have a rising chromatic scale. The *Adagio* begins rather fast, but a slower tempo is adopted when the solo violin enters. The *Andante* is treated with gentle elegance by the lower strings, over which Tátrai's solo violin soars like the lark ascending, as well as duetting eloquently with the solo cello. The final *Adagio* has a gravely religious feeling, with the quavers in the bass going at about the pace of the crotchets in the *Andante*. The minuet swings along with a humorous strut. The problem of equating this tempo with all that happens in the trio is resolved by playing the trio more slowly. Wrong in theory but effective, for once, in practice. The violone part is taken by the cello – Robbins Landon's researches had evidently not crossed the Iron Curtain. The finale goes with great verve and with excellent balance between the various solo instruments and the interjections by the full orchestra. First repeats in the outer movements, but the second has both its repeats and does not sound a moment too long. This seems to me by far the best version I have heard till now.

Two further issues from the 1960s have eluded me. Gerhard Bosse and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Bachorchester recorded just nos. 6 and 8 on 21-14 August 1967 (Eterna 825923), while Helmut Müller-Brühl and the Cologne Chamber Orchestra recorded all three in May 1966 (Schwann VMS 2007)[8]. Many years later, the latter forces resurfaced to contribute several discs to the composite Naxos cycle, but this early effort seems to have vanished from view.

Wilfried Boettcher's single-LP version of the trilogy with the Kammerorchester der Wiener Festspiele was a staple of the Turnabout catalogue (TV 341505). Discogs shows that it was issued in France in 1967, the following year in the UK and USA[9]. Boettcher (1929-1994) studied cello with Fournier and Casals, and conducting with Swarowsky. He founded the Wiener Solistenorchester in 1959 and conducted it until 1966 – probably that is the real identity of the ensemble playing here. Thereafter he extended his conducting experience to embrace opera and larger works. He follows Robbins Landon's advice about double dotting in the introduction, which he builds up well. As the *Allegro* starts, the flute phrases the opening theme as delightfully as did that of Tátrai, but with a slightly more relaxed tempo – the early morning freshness of Litschauer's version is recaptured at last. In the first *Adagio* of the second tempo, he has the solo violin play his repeated double-stopped chords not literally but as down-and-up arpeggios – a plausible interpretation and more effective than simply playing what is written. Plausibility might not have been stretched if the violin had inserted a cadenza before continuing, but that would be a lot to expect back in the 1960s. The *Andante* is brisker than under Tátrai, but the solo violin, if not quite an artist of Tátrai's stature, has ample space for some lyrical flights. The minuet has a gracious quality that has eluded other interpreters and I very much liked the echo effects of the wind phrases after the double bar, even if they are not marked in the score. The tempo is sufficiently relaxed to accommodate the trio, in which Boettcher has the double bass to play the violone part. It combines nicely with the burbling bassoon. The finale is lively but relaxed. The bubbling passages for solo cello are fully effective for the first time in my listening experience so far. No doubt Boettcher, as a cellist, based his tempo on what was practicable, rather than frenetic, for the cello at this point. A clean bill of health, then, for this delightful performance? Yes but … No repeats at all except in the minuet and trio.

[7] As I have pointed out in other articles in this series, Tátrai led the performances from the violin. This orchestra played without a conductor.

[8] Dates and other details throughout this article are from Mike Gray's Classical Discography https://classical-discography.org/search2.php unless otherwise stated.

[9] It is not listed in Gray.

Two further recordings of the trilogy were issued in 1972, just within my cut-off date. Or maybe just one. That by Hanns Reinartz and the Camerata Accademica, Würzburg requires some explanation. It is listed in Gray's Classical Discography as issued by a label called PDU with a different number for each symphony – AC 60028, AC 60029 and AC 60018. These three performances have found their way into a collection, available on YouTube, called "Haydn Great Symphonies", the others being 45 and 82 under "Alexander von Pitamic", a pseudonym put about by Alfred Scholz, 48 under Anton Nanut, a genuine and rather interesting conductor whose name was often used in vain by the likes of Scholz, and 94 and 104 under Alberto Lizzio, another of Scholz's pseudonyms. Elsewhere on YouTube, Reinartz's performances of 6 and 8 – but not 7 – can be found with the orchestra described as the Camerata Accademica Salzburg. So is there any reason to treat the Reinartz recordings seriously? Well, Hanns[10] Reinartz was genuine enough, born in Düsseldorf in 1909 and died there in 1988. According to Wikipedia, he was assistant to Richard Strauss and Hans Pfitzner in the 1930s and held a string of minor posts in Bonn, Solingen, Wuppertal, Weimar and, from 1956, Würzburg, where he was director of the Bavarian State Conservatory of Music. Under his direction, this institution was upgraded in 1973 to the Hochschule für Musik Würzburg. Reinartz was its first President, remaining until 1979. Doubts remain. The PDU label itself seems to have no connection with the recording company of that name created by the Italian pop singer Mina. Gray's Classical Discography shows that it has issued its fair share of discs conducted by "von Pitamic" and even "Scholz" himself, but also others by living artists who certainly exist, such as the pianist Bruno Mezzena. In the end, if the disc is a fake, it must have been pirated from somewhere and the solution seemed easy – the minuet and trio are identical to the Ristenpart recording. However, the fake is a clever one, since "Reinart" begins the introduction by double-dotting, which Ristenpart does not. This section appears to have been lifted from Goberman. Reinart also has second repeats in the outer movements and the first in the *Andante*. This is easily faked and the different timings resulting should be enough to avoid detection by electronic means. The finale, at least, sounds to me identical to Ristenpart's with the repeat added, whereas the opening of the second movement appears to have been taken from Tátrai. Forgive me if I do not hunt down the sources for this performance any further. At this point, we may wonder if the pranksters who compiled the "Reinartz" recordings – there are quite a lot, including a Brandenburg cycle – were also responsible for the Wikipedia article which, as the Wikipedia editors themselves state, is short on citations. Reinartz's academic career is not in doubt[11], but evidence that he also worked as a conductor is limited to the Wikipedia article itself[12] and online resources that seem to derive from it.

The other 1972 issue is a much more serious matter, with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under the distinguished and rather neglected **Ferdinand Leitner** (Profil/Hänssler PH04051). I am not sure if this was a single LP at the time – I cannot find any details of a pre-CD issue[13] – since Leitner takes 74:05 over the entire trilogy. Leitner (1912-1996) was only sixty in 1972, but his best-known discs date from the 1950s so he probably classed as a "golden oldie". A golden oldie with some pretensions to modernity. He is evidently using the Robbins Landon edition, so double-dotting in the introduction, double-bass for the violone part in the trio, every single repeat – the symphony takes just under 25 minutes – and a harpsichord continuo. The latter is not often evident, but provides little cadenzas between the sections in the second movement. This is the first time someone has done this, so it seems churlish to point out that the cadenzas should probably have been by the violin not the harpsichord. That said, this disc should be taken in the same spirit as that of Symphonies 31 and 73 in which another golden oldie, Leopold Ludwig, conducted the same orchestra and it

[10] "Hans" is also found, the majority of sources give "Hanns".

[11] A complete list of Directors and Presidents of the Hochschule für Musik Würzburg can be seen here: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Hochschule_f%C3%BCr_Musik,_W%C3%BCrzburg, viewed 18 February 2026.

[12] As viewed 18 February 2026.

[13] This recording is not listed in Gray or at Discogs.

sounded as if they all settled down for a session of comfortable enjoyment. Here, too, the overriding impression is of beaming, unhurried appreciation of the music. The opening sunrise is brought off with considerable power, after which the flute is given all the space to phrase delightfully. The second subject is the more telling for the fact that we have time to hear it properly. After a solemn, but not hushed, opening *Adagio*, the main *Andante* of the second movement moves ahead surprisingly passionately, the solo violin soaring as if playing Bruch. The minuet has a gracious warmth and the tempo allows the trio to burble along very pleasantly. I have to say I gasped when I heard how slowly Leitner was taking the finale. I managed to adjust and eventually shared the players' evident enjoyment, but in retrospect I think this is too avuncular. Boettcher's slightly slower than usual tempo seems to me absolutely right – steady enough for the solo cello writing to speak, but not so slow as to lack dash. I also prefer the slimmer sound of Boettcher's chamber orchestra. Leitner gets transparent textures with the wind well forward, but with so many strings it can seem as if the lines are drawn with a blunt instrument. A guilty pleasure, all the same.

Märzendorfer, like Leitner, has double dotting in the introduction, all repeats and double bass in the trio. Unusually for him, a distant harpsichord plays in the second movement, though it is not given any cadenza around the short string chords. Märzendorfer's text may, though, derive from independent research rather than Robbins Landon, since in the trio he has the double bass continue with the more lyrical lines after the double bar which, in the Robbins Landon score are allotted to the cello. Unlike Leitner, he has a small complement of strings and has the oboes cut through in full orchestra passages to produce a challengingly abrasive sound. In this, the engineers have perhaps aided him excessively. The recordings in Märzendorfer's cycle, though not the best the early 1970s could offer, generally offered a well-balanced sound picture. Here, it seems that the number of solo instruments tempted a spot of close miking. At the beginning of the minuet, the bassoon doubles the lower strings with the power of a trombone. In the trio of this same movement, the double-bass projects in a way not normally possible on this instrument. The more reticent balance in the Boettcher and Leitner recordings is surely closer to what one would hear in the hall. All this fits in reasonably well, however, with Märzendorfer's typically challenging account. After a carefully graded accelerando in the introduction, the *Allegro* prances away at a lively tempo, but not so much so as to preclude a shapely rendering of the second subject and a due sense of mystery in the chromatic passage. The *Adagio* sections of the second movement are very slow and solemn. I get the idea that Märzendorfer has instructed the strings to play without vibrato – at the beginning there is an ecclesiastical solemnity to the sound. He treats the *Andante* quite differently from any version I have heard till now. The *staccato* crotchets are played *staccatissimo*, creating an impression of tiptoeing on ice. Rather than a gentle support for the lyrical outpourings by the solo violin and cello, they seem to proceed independently. The result is fascinating and, whatever you think, this section does not sound like a minuet in Märzendorfer's hands. The minuet itself is played as a grand, ceremonial affair, at a tempo that allows space for the bassoon and double-bass duet in the trio. The finale is taken at an effervescent lick.

The **Dorati** trilogy was set down in May and June 1972 – Märzendorfer's entire symphony cycle was out by November 1972, in which month it was advertised in *Gramophone*[14]. Dorati takes the introduction faster than any I have heard so far and his crescendo is matter-of-fact and underwhelming. The *Allegro* scampers away delightfully, with an excellent flautist to lead the way. Dorati does not make anything particular of the second subject, though, and in the chromatic passage his unwritten accents at the beginning of each bar robs the music of mystery. His strings at the beginning of the *Adagio* have plenty of vibrato, if you prefer it that way. The concluding *Adagio* is curiously directionless. In the *Andante* he goes for the dainty minuet solution and has the solo violin trim his lyricism within classical limits. Correct, no doubt. Suffice to say that,

[14] Included in a full page advertisement by the Musical Heritage Society, then distributed by Oryx. All documentation of the Märzendorfer cycle – original tapes, editing notes, session diaries and so on – has disappeared. Anthony Hodgson (CRQ Spring, Summer 2014) tells us that the conductor was constantly involved with the project from 1967 to 1971.

while I welcomed Märzendorfer's and Leitner's inclusion of both repeats, I did not regret Dorati's omission of the second as much as I ought to have done. The minuet is full of rococo curlicues – to this end, Dorati adds some unwritten slurs to the violin parts. Small points, but enough to change the character of the music and, not for the first time with a Dorati minuet, I wonder why he bothers to use an Urtext edition if he intends to edit it himself. The trio is pleasant and the finale is excellent at a good lively tempo.

Of the commercial issues up to this point, if you want Urtext and all repeats, it is down to the challenging Märzendorfer and the benign Leitner. If Urtext and repeats are not an issue, the Tátrai has high claims and the Boettcher is delicious, though the omission even of first repeats is a pity. There are three live/broadcast versions from the 50s and early 60s, one of them now commercially available, so do they change anything?

The first, at least, had Symphony 6 on its own. This was recorded on 12 January 1955, and broadcast five days later, as part of a series dedicated to Bach Cantatas – the Haydn was sandwiched between Cantatas 50 and 21 and played by the Boyd Neel Orchestra conducted by **Anthony Collins**. It is included in the Cameo Classics/Richard Itter set. Collins (1893-1963) is mostly remembered for his fine cycle of Sibelius Symphonies, plus some works by Elgar and Delius, all for Decca, and maybe for some of his film scores. His discography also includes a coupling of Mozart's last two symphonies for World Record Club and back in 1938 he founded the London Mozart Orchestra – not to be confused with Harry Blech's London Mozart Players. He was therefore more at home in the 18th century repertoire than we might imagine. The Boyd Neel Orchestra was created in 1933 by the conductor of that name, who directed it until he moved to Canada in 1953[15]. It was influential in the performance of baroque music with small forces and clean texts. It survived Neel's departure, at first under its original name and then, from 1957, as the Philomusica of London. The latter became increasingly inactive in the 21st century and was disbanded in 2023.

It is no surprise if Collins, in 1955, was using an old edition, so no double dotting in the introduction and a cello in the third movement trio. In line with practice at the time, he plays first half repeats in the outer movements and none in the second. Yet there are a few surprises along the way. The opening sunrise builds up majestically, after which the flute introduces a swift and delicate reading of the *Allegro.* Collins is able to give meaning to the second subject with a slight slackening of tempo yet without loss of momentum – a gift seemingly confined to older generations of musicians. Hints that a harpsichord might be present – named as Charles Spinks in the *Radio Times* – reach fruition in the chromatic passage in the development. Collins, surprisingly for a fine Sibelian, apparently takes fright at Haydn's open spaces and treats the written score as mere accompaniment, against which the harpsichord devises some busy running semi-quavers. Having brought the instrument to prominence, you would expect him to have it – or better the solo violin – fill the spaces between the single chords in the second movement, but no such luck. The *Andante* is treated delicately, but the solo violin – Erich Gruenberg – and the unnamed solo cello are given space to soar lyrically, so the movement does not sound like an extra minuet. The minuet itself is rather too stately for my taste, but the tempo proves right for the trio. The solo cello is not asked to project his quavers so, rather than duetting with the bassoon, he simply provides a bubbling accompaniment to it. Anyone who listens to Leitner's finale, or even Boettcher's, and thinks "they took their time in those days", will get a surprise from Collins, who takes it at a fizzing *Presto*. The nifty cello solos come across as an almost impressionistic wash at this speed. A fascinating peep into an age when people were still trying to discover who Haydn was. Not much of the "Papa Haydn" here, at any rate.

Hans von Benda set down his version with the Berliner Kammerorchester und Mitglieder (members) vom Radio-Symphonie-Orchester-Berlin on 12 July 1957, a studio performance for broadcasting. It was once

[15] Wikipedia has 1952. The Bach Cantatas site https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/POL.htm (viewed 20.2.2026) and *The Grove Concise Dictionary of Music* (MacMillan 1988) have 1953.

available on a wonderful blog, "*Mon Musée Musicale"* by René Gagnaux, along with many other treasures, but this blog is currently offline. He does not indicate whether Benda recorded the rest of the trilogy at the same time. Hans von Benda (1888-1972) founded the Berlin Kammerorchester in 1932. This ensemble is not to be confused with the Kammerorchester Berlin, founded in 1945 by Helmut Koch, or with several other near namesakes operating in Berlin. Benda was Artistic Director of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra from 1935 to 1939, while Furtwängler was Chief Conductor, but his own conducting activities were mainly limited to the chamber group he had formed. Unsurprisingly, we have here the old edition, so no double dotting in the introduction and a cello in the trio of the third movement. And no harpsichord. Repeats are limited to first repeats in the outer movements, with none in the second and, exceptionally, the second repeats removed from the minuet and trio. The introduction is unusually slow but builds up well. The flute begins the *Allegro* delicately, but the overriding impression is fiery and energetic. Benda manages to shape the second subject well and creates tension in the chromatic passage. The opening *Adagio* provides a more literal interpretation of Haydn's dynamic markings than any other I have heard. The opening string chorale is a hushed pianissimo, after which the solo violin, Helmut Heller, enters with an aggressive *forte*. This is undeniably what Haydn wrote but most conductors prefer to have the violin enter gently, emerging from the full string texture then gaining volume to reach *forte* for its double-stopped chords. Correct or not, it sounds better that way. The *Andante* is played as a dainty slow minuet – the solo instruments are not encouraged to indulge in lyrical flights. It sounds more like a minuet, in fact, than the real one, which is taken very broadly and very legato. It sounds like a Handel air arranged by Hamilton Harty. Even the trio sounds depressing at this tempo. Presumably Benda cut the repeats to stop it becoming too boring, something that could have been avoided by taking it a proper tempo and with the correct dance step. The finale is swift and fiery. Another product, perhaps, of a time when musicians were still unsure how to play Haydn.

Harry Blech dedicated the first part of the second of the two concerts he conducted with the Orchestra Alessandro Scarlatti di Napoli della RAI, on 24 January 1961, to Symphonies 6-8. After the interval, Maurice Gendron played the D major Cello Concerto. Blech[16] had broadcast the trilogy with the London Mozart Players in 1952, so was no stranger to the music. Inevitably, we have the old edition and, since this is really a live concert not a studio performance for broadcasting, there are a few slips, but there are also compensations. After a well-shaped crescendo in the introduction, the *Allegro*, with the first repeat, dances delightfully. Blech makes an expressive bulge on the long note introducing the second subject – romantic, perhaps but characterful. At the beginning of the second movement, in place of a hushed religious chorale, Blech shapes the music warmly with an unmarked crescendo. This is another way to make sense of Haydn's indication that the solo violin is to enter *forte* – have the introduction played as a crescendo in preparation for it. Blech does not hang about in the *Andante* – he takes the first repeat yet takes less time than several who make no repeats at all. The solo violin and cello, Giuseppe Prencipe and Giacinto Caramia, are encouraged to give an extrovert, forward-moving account of their music. They are not always immaculate, but I loved the vibrancy of the performance. Blech's minuet is as legato as Benda's, but considerably faster and with a good lilt. The trio goes with a swing. The finale, with the first repeat, has real verve. This is, at the very least, a lively and characterful supplement to the commercial recordings discussed.

	I	II	III	IV
Weisbach	04:24 with first repeat	06:50 with first repeat	04:32	03:37 with first repeat
Litschauer	04:16* with first repeat	06:23* with neither repeat	04:38	03:31 with first repeat
Goberman	04:29	07:16	04:50	03:35

[16] I gave a brief account of this conductor's career in my article on Symphony 49.

	with first repeat	with neither repeat		with first repeat
Ristenpart	04:10 with first repeat	05:43 with neither repeat	04:12	03:23 with first repeat
Tátrai	04:19 with first repeat	09:19 with both repeats	04:06	03:10
Boettcher	03:33 with neither repeat	05:23 with neither repeat	04:26	02:35 with neither repeat
Leitner	06:09 with both repeats	08:40 with both repeats	04:40	05:27 with both repeats
Märzendorfer	05:39 with both repeats	08:49 with both repeats	04:21	04:32 with both repeats
Dorati	05:52 with both repeats	08:05 with first repeat	04:43	04:49 with both repeats
Collins	04:26 with first repeat	7:32 with neither repeat	04:56	03:16 with first repeat
Benda	04:30 with first repeat	06:05 with neither repeat	03:33 2nd repeats of minuet and trio omitted	03:22 with first repeat
Blech H	04:31 with first repeat	05:44 with first repeat	04:29	03:13 with first repeat

* In view of the jumping grooves, this timing is presumably a little too short.

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