

“How Do You Do?”

Vivid Correspondence Spurs Ground-Breaking Quartets by Haydn and Mozart

Vienna, Austria – *Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), those two colossal musical figures of the late 18th century whose footprints remain stamped upon mainstream awareness over 200 years after their deaths, were pals. There likely was an element of mentorship to their interactions – the former composer, dubbed ‘Papa Haydn’ by Mozart and others, being almost 24 years older than the latter – but the two composers enjoyed a friendship that was unusually casual and intimate for two gentlemen so generationally distinct from each other. Some of the composers’ acquaintances testify that the two even addressed each other with familiar pronouns (‘du’ instead of ‘Sie’). Powdered wigs must have spun over such linguistic irreverence!*

Although an early encounter has not been documented, it’s possible that Haydn and Mozart met in person before Mozart set up camp in Vienna, for good, in 1782. Mozart had visited Vienna in the years before his move there; and Haydn spent his winters in Eisenstadt, which lay a manageable 40-or-so miles away. The two likely never met, though, until a concert in Vienna in December of 1783 that featured works by both composers.

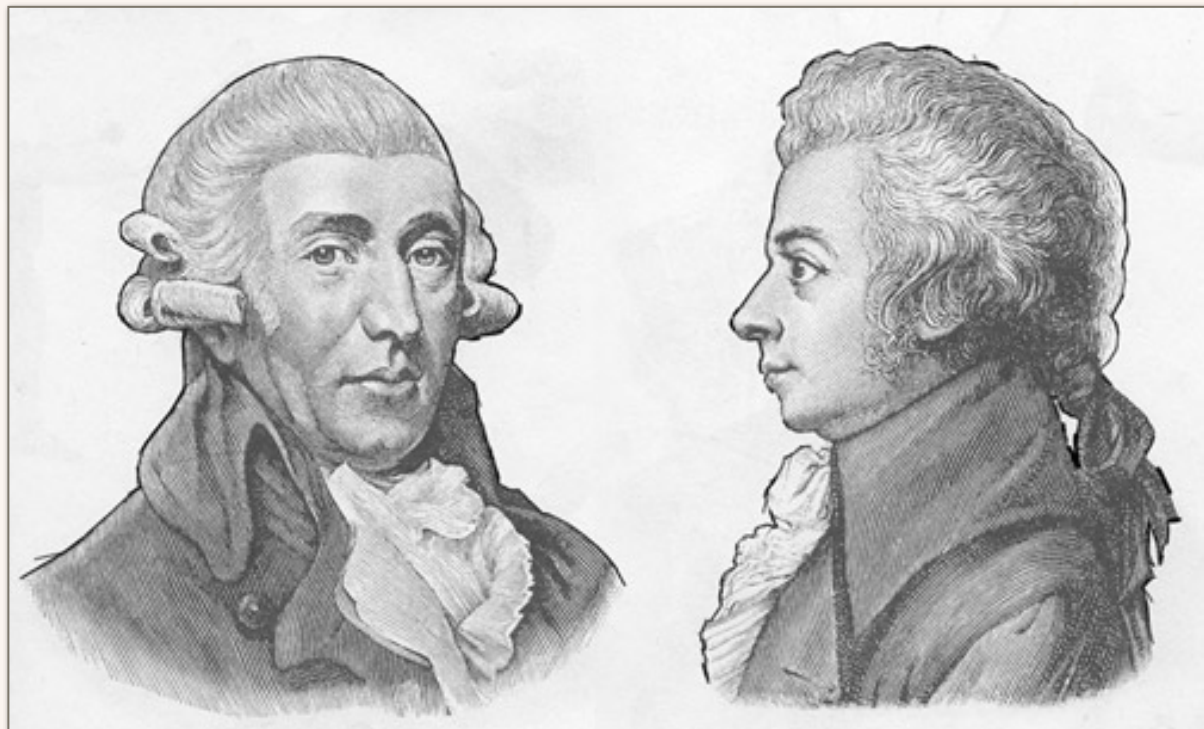
Haydn and Mozart both were sensationally successful composers (in renown, if not in livelihood) in their own time, and they both regarded the other’s work with fitting admiration. Haydn, who admitted that he even dreamed about Mozart’s music, wrote of his younger colleague:

If only I could impress Mozart’s inimitable works on the soul of every friend of music, and the souls of high personages in particular, as deeply, with the same musical understanding and with the same deep feeling, as I understand and feel them, the nations would vie with each other to possess such a jewel.

And from the important Mozart biography by Franz Niemetschek, we have anecdotal evidence of Mozart’s admiration for Haydn:

At a private party a new work of Joseph Haydn was being performed. Besides Mozart there were a number of other musicians present, among them a certain man who was never known to praise anyone but himself. He was standing next to Mozart and found fault with one thing after another. For a while Mozart listened patiently; when he could bear it no longer and the fault-finder once more conceitedly declared: ‘I would not have done that’, Mozart retorted: ‘Neither would I but do you know why? Because neither of us could have thought of anything so appropriate.’

The esteem in which Mozart and Haydn held each other manifested itself in that most glorious of musical genres: the string quartet. The two were known to play string quartets together, with Haydn on violin and Mozart on viola, and Mozart’s



Best Friends Forever? Haydn and Mozart.

string quartet output was seriously influenced by the revolutionary work of Papa Haydn. Mozart surely encountered Haydn’s recently composed Opus 33 string quartets upon the younger musician’s arrival in Vienna, and these daring compositions spurred Mozart into writing a set of six quartets – arguably some of his very finest chamber music, including tonight’s ‘Dissonance’ quartet – that he ultimately dedicated to Haydn in 1785. This dedication was a profound sign of respect, given that most dedications at the time were issued to patrons as a means to acquire aristocratic favor and, with it, mad cash.

Haydn heard these pieces performed (and perhaps even played them himself) in the year of their completion. Afterward, he was so thoroughly stirred by the quartets that he proclaimed to Leopold Mozart (Wolfgang’s father):

Before God and as an honest man I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name; he has taste, and, furthermore, the most profound knowledge of composition.

In December of 1790, Haydn left for London; and given Mozart’s death the following year, the composers never saw each other again.

EDITOR’S PICK: RECORDING OF THE WEEK

Diderot String Quartet has finally hit the recording studio! Mozart’s ‘Dissonance’ quartet not only forms the heart of tonight’s program: it’s also the DSQ’s flagship recorded work. We recorded the piece – thanks to Ben Cooper, Josh Lee, Dave Walker, and Rocking Horse Studio in Pittsfield, New Hampshire – while blissfully stationed at Avaloch Farm Music Institute. Join our mailing list to stay up-to-speed on the recording’s release date! We guarantee your level of delight to be off-the-charts!

Today’s Programme

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

String Quartet in G Major, Op. 33/No. 5, ‘How Do You Do’

- i. *Vivace assai*
- ii. *Largo e cantabile*
- iii. *Alla Polacca – Trio*
- iv. *Rondo: Allegro*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

String Quartet in C Major, K. 465, ‘Dissonance’

- i. *Adagio – Allegro*
- ii. *Andante Cantabile*
- iii. *Menuetto Allegretto – Trio*
- iv. *Molto Allegro*

~ pause ~

Franz Joseph Haydn

String Quartet in C Major, Op. 50/No. 2, ‘The Prussian’

- i. *Vivace*
- ii. *Adagio*
- iii. *Menuetto*
- iv. *Finale: Vivace assai*

+++ **Breaking News** +++

Upcoming Concerts by Diderot String Quartet

Saturday, September 26 | 5:00 pm

Washington National Cathedral

Quartet Correspondence

Sunday, September 27 | 3:30 pm

Music at St. Alban's, Staten Island

Mozart & Beethoven w/Kenneth Hamrick, piano

Friday, December 4 | 6:00 pm

Music at King Manor, Queens

Quartet Correspondence

Friday, December 8 | 7:30 pm

Washington National Cathedral

This Endris Night

Saturday, January 9 | 9:00 pm

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, NYC

Shubert's Winterreise with Dashon Burton

Thursday, January 14 | 7:30 pm

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, NYC

Viola Quintets with Sarah Darling, viola

Diderot String Quartet

Adriane Post, violin

Johanna Novom, violin

Kyle Miller, viola

Paul Dwyer, cello

Diderot String Quartet – named after the prominent eighteenth-century French philosopher and Boccherini enthusiast Denis Diderot – came together in 2012 in New York. Having first met at Oberlin Conservatory and the Juilliard School, all four musicians share a background in historical performance and a passion for the string quartet genre, and they quickly found the thrill of exploring this repertoire on period instruments to be irresistible. Recently featured in the Chamber Music America article “New Voices in Old Music”, Diderot String Quartet aims to bring the raw excitement of that experience to audiences, seeking a fresh voice and rhetorical approach in both familiar and lesser-known works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Entering a second year of residency at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Manhattan, the ensemble is also newly appointed Quartet in Residence at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. Recent and upcoming engagements include series such as Renaissance & Baroque in Pittsburgh, Music at St. James in Lancaster, PA, Cambridge Society of Early Music in Massachusetts, a performance residency at Aldeburgh Music in the UK, and full seasons of NY concerts, including appearances on series in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. DSQ also enjoys hosting salon-style events, at places such as Macculloch Hall Historical Museum in Morristown, and Jason Viseltar's violin atelier in Lower Manhattan.

The members of DSQ can be heard internationally in a wide variety of solo and ensemble repertoire, from performances with Apollo's Fire, Handel and Haydn Society, Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra, and the Boston Early Music and Carmel Bach Festivals, to recitals of new compositions on gut strings. They have been recipients of numerous fellowships and competition prizes — including a Fulbright grant and First Prize at the American Bach Soloists International Young Artist Competition — and they hold degrees from the Juilliard School, Oberlin Conservatory, University of Michigan, and Eastman School of Music.

A Quartet Fit For a Grand Duke

Haydn's Opus 33/No. 5

Haydn dedicated his Opus 33 quartets – completed and published in Vienna in 1781, shortly before Mozart's arrival – to the Grand Duke Paul of Russia, earning the set the nickname ‘Russian’ (not to be confused with Haydn's ‘Prussian’ quartets). The opus is one of Haydn's finest, a milestone that bolstered the composer's already legendary reputation and, no doubt, tickled the young Mozart.

Tonight, we perform the fifth quartet of the set, a lovely piece in G major whose first movement begins and closes with a catchy little cadential figure. The austere four-note melody in the upper voice has earned the quartet, at least amongst English-speakers, the nickname ‘How do you do?’. With this musical greeting, Haydn provides the perfect opening for tonight's dialogue of string quartets between himself and the precocious Mozart.

A Quartet Fit For Papa Haydn

Mozart's ‘Haydn Quartets’

Perhaps the greatest extant testament to Mozart and Haydn's phenomenal friendship is Mozart's set of six string quartets that he dedicated to the elder composer. Mozart finished these quartets in 1785, just a few years after Haydn released his blockbuster Opus 33 set, and it is this writer's humble opinion that Mozart's oft-dubbed ‘Haydn Quartets’ thoroughly rock. Mozart's respect for Haydn must have been great, indeed: if the remarkable quality of the quartets weren't enough, the gushy written dedication that prefaces the set would have made even royalty blush.

The ‘Dissonance’ quartet, K. 465, may be the most famous member of the set of quartets that Mozart dedicated to Papa Haydn. Of particular interest is the piece's opening passage, which exhibits a flagrant smattering of dissonance that has earned the quartet its nickname. The passage must have caused no small amount of head-scratching in Mozart's day. An Italian composer denounced the music as ‘execrable’ and ‘barbarous’, and various publishers either took the liberty of ‘correcting’ certain notes or simply refused to print a work that was riddled with so many ‘errors’. We know the truth, though: this famous opening passage is just heavily spiced.

A Quartet Fit For a King

Haydn's Opus 50/No. 2

Haydn completed his Opus 50 set of quartets – his first full set of quartets since Opus 33 and his first contribution to the genre after hearing Mozart's dedication to him – in 1787. Unlike Mozart, Haydn chose a proper aristocratic dedicatee for his opus: King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia. Because of this royal dedication, Haydn's Opus 50 quartets have earned the nickname ‘Prussian’ (not to be confused with Haydn's ‘Russian’ quartets).

Haydn successfully managed, through no small amount of deception, to have the quartets published in both London and Vienna by two separate publishers: Artaria and William Forster. What a crafty lad!

The second quartet of the set, which we will perform for your delectation tonight, is in C major and does not want for the delight that Haydn routinely pours into his quartets.

DEAR LOVER OF STRING QUARTETS,

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SHARING IN THE JOY OF GREAT MUSIC THIS EVENING!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT ABOUT UPCOMING PROJECTS AND OUR NEW SEASON,
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YOU AGAIN SOON!

MUSICALLY YOURS,

DSQ

ADRIANE, JOHANNA, KYLE AND PAUL