Ernst Maerzendorfer and the First Recorded Cycle of Haydn Symphonies
A Second Set of Reflections
by Christopher Howell

In my previous article in this series, I gave a fairly detailed introduction to the first complete cycle of Haydn symphonies on record, conducted by Ernst Maerzendorfer. I then compared twelve of Maerzendorfer's symphonies with those conducted by Antal Dorati in what many still mistakenly insist on describing as the first complete cycle. Contrary to my expectations, I found Maerzendorfer preferable, not just here and there, but in almost every movement. I hinted that I might come back at some stage with another twelve comparisons – I might, after all, have unwittingly lighted upon Maerzendorfer's twelve best performances, or Dorati's twelve worst. So here we are.

This time, however, I have pursued a further line of enquiry. For each symphony, I have also compared Maerzendorfer and Dorati with an earlier version – two earlier versions with the later symphonies, where the choice is clearly greater. For many of the lower-numbered symphonies, of course, no earlier version existed or, where it did, a copy could not be found. As so often, I have to record my gratitude to the bloggers, YouTube posters and discussion groups who have made it possible to hear so much rare material, but even they have not yet unearthed everything. I think I have found some interesting, and sometimes surprising, comparisons. Somewhat diffidently, I give a table of timings at the foot of each symphony. Diffidently, readers should always look at these in the light of my comments over which repeats have been taken. Another general point is that Dorati had the benefit of the Robbins Landon edition. I am not sure about Maerzendorfer, but he certainly seems to have a cleaned-up text. Earlier recordings usually took on trust the old Breitkopf scores. I shall not detail the differences one by one, but there are numerous small variants in phrasing, dynamics and even notes, where some early editor had sought to "improve" Haydn's work.

Symphony no. 7 is the central panel of the triptych of symphonies "Le Matin", "**Le Midi**" and "Le Soir". All three make much use of concertante solo instruments. **Maerzendorfer**'s oboes in the first movement are well to the fore and have something of the rasp we expect today from period instruments. The *Adagio* introduction is alert and mock-pompous. The *Allegro* has plenty of drive, with the solo instruments only just managing to fit in their notes at times. The first repeat is taken, not the second. The second movement begins with a curious recitative passage opening in the minor key. Maerzendorfer is grave without trying to read too much into it. The solo violin interprets his *dolce* marking as an invitation to play as if this were Max Bruch. This is one of the less convincing moments of the performance. In the aria-like G major *Adagio* that follows, Maerzendorfer keeps things cool and flowing, without too much long legato. The effect is expressive without undue romanticism. Maerzendorfer's Minuet is buoyant and striding. The solo bass and the horns make a cheerfully confident showing in the Trio. Maerzendorfer has the Finale, marked *Allegro*, go at a terrific lick. There is nifty work from the flute and some dynamic shading is managed. Both repeats are taken.

Dorati is notably slower in the *Adagio* introduction, which comes across as a politer affair than with Maerzendorfer. There is a lot to be said for his *Allegro*, though. He has equal drive to Maerzendorfer in the *tutti* passages but gives the solo instruments more space. Moreover, he manages this without the tempo seeming to sag. He takes both repeats. Dorati is slightly humdrum at the opening of the recitative movement, though his solo violin is arguably more in style. His swifter tempo for the aria-like section makes the music more decorative than sublime. Here I prefer Maerzendorfer. Dorati's Minuet is well poised – this is not one of his sagging minuets – and his solo instruments are again given a certain space in the Trio. It is the treatment of the solo instruments, too, that gives Dorati a

certain edge in the finale. Incidentally, both conductors agree that there should be a harpsichord, but that you should not hear it very often.

I am not able to say which recording came first out of those by the Austrian Symphony Orchestra under Karl Randolph (Remington), the Vienna Chamber Orchestra under Franz Litschauer (Parlophone) and the Philadelphia Orchestra under **Eugene Ormandy** (Columbia). The Ormandy was set down in April 1950 – probably the three are roughly contemporary. There was also a recording on Royale by the Berlin Symphony Orchestra under Joseph Balzer. Given Royale's track record – the real identity of other recordings by "Balzer" is known – this may well be a pirate issue of the Remington. Litschauer made a useful contribution to early Haydn recordings, but a special interest obviously attaches to a rare Haydn outing by Ormandy, who rarely visited this composer. I am aware of recordings of 45, 88 and 101.

Ormandy appears to use a substantial body of strings, but he has them very much under control and there is no overdue weight, let alone lushness. His introductory *Adagio* is surprisingly jaunty. The *Allegro* is strongly propelled but, even more than Dorati – helped no doubt by very fine players – the soloists have plenty of time to shape their phrases. At the end of the exposition and at the same point in the recapitulation, Ormandy allows a rallentando. This is the only touch that implies an earlier style of interpretation. What struck me forcibly, in the development section, is the way the phrases grow into and out of each other, answering and questioning. There is a greater sense, than with Maerzendorfer and Dorati, of a conductor's presence actually shaping the music. He makes both repeats. As the Recitative introduction to the second movement opens, Ormandy makes a lot of the 32nd notes in the middle strings. He builds this section up, gradually screwing up the tension. You may argue that this sort of overall shaping, almost imposing a programme on the music, is essentially a romantic concept. But you cannot actually say that Ormandy does anything not written in the score. In the body of the movement his tempo is similar to Maerzendorfer's broader one. Again, I was struck by his ability to create a dialogue between the phrases and between the instruments. Ormandy's Minuet goes with a broad lilt. In the Trio, he has a cello rather than a bass soloist. Haydn's prescribed instrument was the violone. If you want to know what that sounded like, no doubt the various period instrument recordings can tell you. Robbins Landon suggested the double bass as a modern alternative, but Ormandy's recording predated this. His finale has tremendous drive – and an orchestra that can manage it with ease.

To modern ears, Ormandy in Haydn may sound out of his comfort zone – but far less so than I expected. He brings to the music the extra qualities of a great interpreter, but without smothering it. I found it more rewarding than either Maerzendorfer or Dorati.

Symphony no. 7	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	5:24	9:08	3:52	4:00	22:25
Dorati	7:36	8:33	3:38	4:00	23:48
Ormandy	7.50	9:08	3:33	3:45	24:16

Symphony no. 22 in E flat, known as **"The Philosopher"**, has five movements in **Maerzendorfer**'s version. This is a case of having your cake and eating it. In truth, though, I do not know how far things were explained in the notes that came with the original LP. What has happened is that Haydn wrote a 4-movement work that begins with a grave slow movement and has, throughout, the original feature of two cor anglais in the orchestra. Another version exists, in three movements only, omitting the first movement and the minuet but interpolating an *Andante grazioso*. This version substitutes flutes for cor anglais in the two movements that are the same. Since cor anglais were not often available in earlier times, this version was more common in Haydn's own day, although doubts have been raised as to whether he actually wrote the *Andante grazioso*. Maerzendorfer places this movement in the middle and has the flute parts played an octave lower on the cor anglais. This is naughty, but I have other reasons for thinking he is using a pre-Robbins Landon version, so the naughtiness may not be his. Up to a point, nowadays, in your computer, you can shuffle the files to hear one or the other version, except that really, to do this properly, Maerzendorfer should have recorded the second and last movements again with flutes. Still, he does the extra movement very beautifully so you can confidently go here if you want to know what it's like.

Maerzendorfer has quite different dynamics from the Robbins Landon edition in the first movement and he rejects the usual *religioso* interpretation, having the cellos and basses strut along and a certain elegance in the violin phrasing. He plays only the first repeat, so you may well feel he underestimates the potential of this remarkable movement. His second movement and finale are superbly taut, with all repeats. His Minuet has a lovely lilt. The Trio goes notably slower. If you don't object to this in principle, it's very nicely done.

Dorati plays the original 4-movement version. His strings are no more *piano staccato* throughout most of the opening movement than Maerzendorfer's and I do not personally care for the way he has the cor anglais notes completely separated, almost as if they do not make a musical phrase at all. This, though, is the stuff of HIP versions to come, so some may like it. Dorati is broader than Maerzendorfer and finds a certain variety in the violin phrasing. Towards the end he suddenly drops to piano. This is quite magical, though it has no justification in the score – if the markings mean anything, it ought to have been like this all through. Like Maerzendorfer, he omits the second repeat. His second movement is a little slower than Maerzendorfer's. The phrasing is rather fussy, substituting a *galante* elegance for Maerzendorfer's forceful drive. Here and in the finale he plays all repeats. Dorati's Minuet is slower than Maerzendorfer's, a preening, bewigged affair. On the other hand, this enables him to take the Trio at the same tempo which is theoretically correct, if not very engaging. Dorati has the horns enunciate their repeated notes at the beginning of the finale less clearly than Maerzendorfer but, after this rather flabby start, the movement goes with plenty of verve.

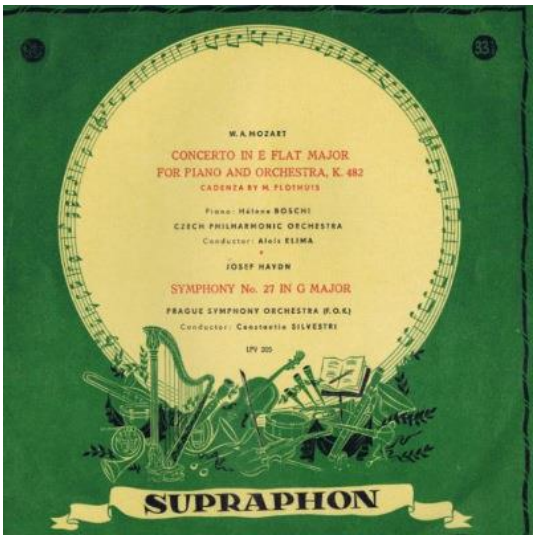
WERM I lists a version of this symphony with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jonathan Sternberg. I do not know whether this preceded the recording by **Karl Haas** and the London Baroque Ensemble, recorded on 4 July 1951 and issued by Parlophone on two 78s. The German-Jewish conductor and musicologist Karl Wilhelm Jacob Haas (1900-1970) came to England in 1939, a refugee from Nazi persecution. He founded the London Baroque Orchestra in 1941 and it continued to operate until 1966. It did not play only baroque music and it included some of London's finest players of the day. It is at least possible that one of the horns here is Denis Brain, since he played with them regularly. An institution somewhat parallel to the London Mozart Players, then. Haas did not have Harry Blech's charisma but musicians tended to prefer his more rigorous approach.

Haas does not emphasize the *religioso* aspect of the first movement. The string quavers are played fairly lightly and there is a certain grace to the proceedings. Smiling wisdom rather than ponderous philosophy. Neither repeat is taken. Since his timing is at the outside limit is what could go on a 78 side, the reasons for this seem obvious. He gives all repeats in the second and third movements. His second movement is not fiercely driven as is Maerzendorfer's and it retains a degree of elegance, but without the fussiness that we hear from Dorati. This difference is more marked still in the Minuet. Like Dorati, Haas takes it at a slow enough tempo not to have to go slower in the Trio, but he manages a charming grace as opposed to bewigged preening. Haas's finale, like his second movement, does not have Marzendorfer's fierce drive, but it bubbles along very nicely. The smiling wisdom I noted in the first movement is really the keynote to this performance which, 67 years on, still exudes a remarkable air of rightness. While I would prefer Maerzendorfer over Dorati, I would suggest that Haas set a standard matched by neither of them.

Symphony no. 22	I	II	III	IV	TT	Andante grazioso
Maerzendorfer	6:23	4:37	3:18	3:18	17:39	2:25
Dorati	7:49	4:41	3:39	3:17	19:27	-
Haas	4:54	4:38	3:33	3:26	16:32	-

Symphony no. 27 in G, despite the number, is one of the earliest of all. Though modest in scale it has plenty to offer, with some striking minor key twists. The central movement – of three – is a *Siciliano* for strings only. The violins are muted, the violas, cellos and basses play pizzicato throughout. **Maerzendorfer** has his oboes pungently forward in the first movement and achieves a vital and remarkably full-blooded effect. Both repeats are taken. He avoids romanticizing the *Siciliano*, almost to a fault – the pizzicato strings are somewhat heavy. Here he plays only the first repeat. He gets a nicely clucking effect from his oboes in the finale which goes with plenty of vitality, proper dynamic shading in the minor key moments and both repeats.

Dorati has his oboes neatly tucked under cover in the first movement, but his horns are well forward and he has a fairly evident harpsichord – if Maerzendorfer had one at all, he made sure we did not know. Dorati's more detailed phrasing – some might say fussy – and his less full timbres stress that this is an early work. They also rob it of much of the stature Maerzendorfer supplies. Dorati plays only the first repeat. In the *Siciliano*, Dorati's pizzicato strings are lighter, which is a point in his favour, but again his well-meant detailed phrasing loses the longer line and reduces the music. Like Maerzendorfer, he omits the second repeat. Dorati's finale is spirited, but what wants to be detailed phrasing comes across as a strong accent on the first beat of every bar, emphasized by the inevitable plonk from the harpsichord. Here he plays both repeats. I find Dorati's approach rather patronizing, as though he feels the music would not be worth hearing without the input of his sage wisdom.



In 1946 the manuscript of a supposedly unknown Haydn symphony was found in the country home of Baron Samuel von Brukenthal near Hermannstadt, now Sibiu in Romania. It was performed in 1950. The difficulty of movement in and out of the Eastern Bloc in those days, and the general unawareness of Haydn's earlier symphonies, allowed the symphony a brief season of glory before it was recognized as a copy of Symphony no. 27. According to Wikipedia, it was first recorded by the Prague Symphony Orchestra under **Constantin Silvestri**, issued on Supraphon, under the title of the *Hermannstädter* Symphony. However, René Gagnaux, whose marvellous site *Mon musée musical* is my source for the Silvestri – and much else – refers to an earlier recording by the Romanian Philharmonic Orchestra, though without further details. As the cover shows, the Silvestri was issued as Symphony no. 27, though it is possible that Supraphon revamped the cover when the facts became known. This recording is first listed in WERM III under Symphony no. 27, when it was joined by a Concert Hall recording under Walter Goehr. The exact date of the Goehr recording is not known. I suspect Silvestri is using the text as of the Hermannstadt score, since there are several small differences to the melodic line as in the Robbins Landon edition and the Maerzendorfer and Dorati recordings.

Constantin Silvestri is known for his wilfully free interpretations of romantic and early 20th century showpieces. In many case I find him more obnoxious than enthralling, but I realize he has his strong admirers. As for his credentials in the early classical repertoire, he is a practically unknown factor here. On this showing – one would need to hear him in a later Haydn or Mozart symphony to be sure – he is free in this repertoire but not greatly so. Gentler passages in the outer movements relax slightly, but not too disturbingly – much less so than in some Mozart performances I have commented on by Tibor Paul or Willy Ferrero, conductors who, in other contexts, manage to be free in a more natural way than Silvestri. Silvestri reads a lot beneath the lines in terms of dynamics, but he also has a sense of the long line and I found my ear led forward where Dorati's lesser shadings sounded fussy. No second repeats in either of these movements, nor in the *Siciliano*. Silvestri is substantially slower here than the others, but I did not feel that he got sticky, indeed, I felt he maintained the music floating aloft with a wonderful grace. He finds a greater beauty and range of expression than one might have thought this innocent little work can yield. Perhaps he should have recorded more Haydn and less Tchaikovsky.

Symphony no. 27	I	II	III	TT
Maerzendorfer	6:22	4:11	2:55	13:29
Dorati	4:19	3:59	2:48	11:08
Silvestri	4:17	5:36	1:51	11:44

Though **Symphony no. 40 in F** is not quite as early a work as no. 27, it is not much later and another case of a misleading number. It is a substantial piece with an energetic, rather grand *Allegro* first movement, a somewhat jaunty *Andante più tosto Allegretto* second movement, a dignified Minuet with some noble horn writing in the Trio and a fugal finale. **Maerzendorfer** is robust and well-phrased in the first movement. Once again, oboes are well forward and he extracts a remarkably full sound from the smallish orchestra. Both repeats are played. He takes the second movement at a steady walking pace, well pointed without overdoing the charm. Here he gives only the first repeat.

The Minuet has a good lilt and the horns make a fine effect in the Trio. The finale, which has no written repeats, is built to a splendid conclusion.

Dorati's first movement is more string based, with the harpsichord well in evidence, even adding a few ting-a-lings of its own where Dorati – or someone – evidently felt Haydn had not written enough music. His broader tempo has perhaps more grace but also seems more formal. Only the first repeat. Dorati is also a little slower in the second movement. This strings-only texture might have been considered a cue for the harpsichord to stay silent as well. Instead, the harpsichordist's right hand is very busy indeed, on a lute stop or something similar, and recorded so far back that my first impression – and this on headphones – was that a track of something else had got mixed in by mistake. If you were listening on loudspeakers, you might think that the kid next door was practicing his scales, rather than suppose it to emanate from the CD. Very odd. Dorati's Minuet and Trio are somewhat exaggeratedly formal in their elegance. His finale is steady but builds up well.

For many people, the names of Haydn and **Sir Thomas Beecham** were once almost as synonymous as Beecham and Delius. Certainly, Beecham deserves praise for propagating all 12 of the "London Symphonies" at a time when many conductors thought the "Surprise" and the "Clock" more than enough. The paradox is that he showed an almost total lack of interest in the other 92 symphonies, his sole foray on disc being a recording of no. 40 set down with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra on 20 April 1946. This seems to have been the first recording of the work.

We will charitably suppose that the need to put each movement on a 78 side accounts for the total absence of repeats in the first two movements and the missing second repeat in the Minuet. Another sign of the times might be the massive rallentandos at the end of movements – slightly less so in the first than the others – and a few, fortunately very few, touches of portamento in the strings.

Beecham takes an elegant, gracious view of the first movement, with very detailed phrasing. Was it the ambling country walk of the second movement that particularly attracted Beecham to this symphony? With poised, elegant phrasing and much dynamic shading, he certainly draws a wealth of expression, humorous yet wistful, from it. He seems to have his strings muted, though this may be an effect of the recording. His Minuet is slow but with such a smiling grace and highly inflected phrasing that it stays afloat. Indeed, he has you thinking it is the loveliest tune you've heard. Gorgeous contributions from the horns in the Trio. At the beginning of the second part of this Trio, Beecham suppresses the wind parts and has the strings play solo. I say "Beecham", but I really do not know if this was his rewriting or whether he took on trust a doctored edition. Authentic or not, it is enchanting. His finale builds steadily with, again, much dynamic variation.

I love this, but I have to say there is as much Beecham as there is Haydn. I shall certainly return to it – but for Beecham and for the privilege of hearing such a master of pliant orchestral phrasing. When I want to hear Haydn's own voice, I shall go to Maerzendorfer.

Symphony no. 40	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	6:47	4:38	4:29	2:56	18:51
Dorati	4:50	4:41	4:49	3:04	17:25
Beecham	3:51	3:21	4:24	3:15	14:53

Symphony no. 46 in B major bears a plausible number for its date so belongs to about a decade later than no. 40. It has many unusual features. The first movement starts confidently but is often restless. The second movement is in a wistful B minor – so every movement is in B – though it often turns towards the sublime. A broad Minuet has a strange, almost *religioso* Trio. The finale starts in folksy high spirits but has several odd twists. The oddest of these is the reintroduction of a variant of the Minuet towards the end. This is a formal procedure that may not have been done again until Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Haydn's return to the Minuet is not, however, the prelude to a sweeping victory. Far from it, after a tentative attempt to re-establish the earlier high spirits, the music practically gives up the ghost.

Maerzendorfer is so fully alive to every twist and turn as to make detail comment unnecessary. One can only regret that he plays only the first repeats in the outer movements and none in the second. It would have been no hardship to hear such strikingly original music, so appreciatively played, over again.

Dorati is no less appreciative than Maerzendorfer of the first movement's twists and turns. Like Maerzendorfer, unfortunately, his appreciation does not extend to taking the second repeat. In the second movement he plays the first repeat, which Maerzendorfer omits, but adopts a tempo so much faster that his performance is about half a minute shorter in spite of the extra music. He achieves a wistful grace that has its own validity, it is true, but the experience he offers is a far more superficial one. Dorati then proceeds to a badly sagging Minuet. His finale is equal to Maerzendorfer's for most of the time, and likewise omits the second repeat. The return of the Minuet, though, is less welcome at Dorati's plodding tempo.

The exact date of the Concert Hall recording by **Walter Goehr** may not be known, but it is listed in WERM II, so presumably was issued in 1951 or 1952. As often with early Concert Hall records, the orchestra is described as the Concert Hall Symphony Orchestra. The performance later appeared on a Musical Masterpieces Society LP, where the orchestra was identified as the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra. No such orchestra existed at that time, but the name points to it being a pick-up band of Dutch musicians. They play well, in any case. This seems to have been the first recording of the symphony.

Walter Goehr (1903-1960) was, like Karl Haas, a German Jew who sought refuge in England from Nazi persecution. He was much admired by Walter Legge of EMI, but not so much so that Legge actually asked him to do much beyond numerous accompaniments and, famously, an early work by Tippett. After the war years, Goehr became a Godsend to shoestring companies such as Concert Hall for his capacity to cover a vast repertoire, from Monteverdi to

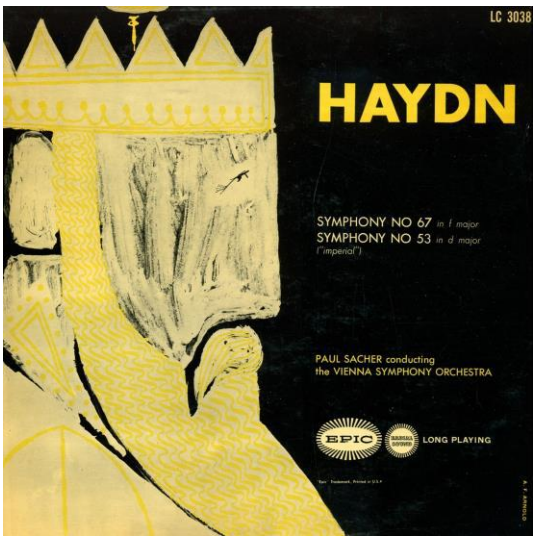
Messiaen, with minimum fuss. During the intervals of recording one work, he could be seen studying the score of the next. He was a fine conductor whose work often shows a rugged truthfulness rather in the Sanderling mould. There are times, in the outer movements of this symphony, where he obtains a fierce conviction from the orchestra that the other two do not quite match. He plays first repeats only in the outer movements. His tempo for the second movement is about midway between Maerzendorfer's and Dorati's, and he gives the first repeat, which Maerzendorfer did not. He is more robust than delicate here, and in the Minuet, too, he has an attractive robustness but not quite Maerzendorfer's lilt. The actual recording, as often with Concert Hall, is problematic, with a long reverberation that may partly account for the apparent lack of delicacy. As the middle of the LP is approached, distortion increases, but this is far better than many Concert Hall recordings I've encountered – I am grateful to René Gagnaux's *Mon Musée Musical* site for the opportunity to have heard it. This symphony certainly entered the catalogue in a worthy version.

Symphony no. 46	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	5:41	5:06	3:10	4:08	18:07
Dorati	6:08	4:33	3:44	4:32	18:58
Goehr Walter	5:45	5:25	3:35	4:33	19:18

No source of information I have consulted explains why **Symphony no. 53 in D** has been called **"L'Impériale"**. This symphony has collected a fairly poor press, with suggestions that Haydn was going through a tired phase in this and other "middle period" works. It has three alternative finales, though Robbins Landon believed the third was not Haydn's work. Another puzzle – for me – is why I know the tune of the second movement very well indeed, though I am sure I have never heard the contrasting minor key sections before.

Be that as it may, **Maerzendorfer** does not seem to buy the idea that this is an inferior work. His grand introduction has you sitting up and we note that one of the features of this performance will be incisive timpani. Hard sticks? The principal theme of the movement, a rocking major triad, suggests ceremonial amplitude in his hands, while certain passages, in the development for example, have an open, out-of-doors feeling. First repeat only. He finds a nice strut for the second movement, neither underestimating it nor trying to read too much pathos into the minor-key episodes. All repeats, and there are quite a lot, are observed. His Minuet is grandly ceremonial, but he and the Viennese players know how to make even a slow minuet lilt. In the Trio, he balances the flute behind the violins in the first part, then "solos it out" when the same music returns in the second part. Maerzendorfer gives Finales A and B. Both are punchy and brilliant, with repeats in the first – Haydn marked none in the second, which he apparently adapted from an opera overture.

In the slow introduction, **Dorati** has the soft answering phrases on the strings played in a tempo completely unrelated to that of the forte sections, an error that even a first-year conducting student would be expected not to make. The body of the movement goes with good vitality, if a tad short of Maerzendorfer's fiery display. First repeat only. Dorati's second movement is lighter than Maerzendorfer's and I would have sworn it was faster, but the statistics show this not to be so. In order to create an oh-so-affectionate effect, in the enunciation of the theme, Dorati makes a slight hesitation before every second bar. Once here and there could be nice, but doing it every time just makes the joke stale. All repeats are done. Dorati's Minuet and Trio are a dreary plod indeed. He plays only Finale B, but suddenly springs to life here. This is brilliant and effervescent, with gently graceful contrasting material. This movement possibly surpasses Maerzendorfer's excellent version, but hardly provides a reason to prefer Dorati as a whole.



This symphony was first recorded in around 1938 by the Paris Conservatoire orchestra conducted by Edvard Fendler. I chose for my comparison, however, a recording conducted by **Paul Sacher**, with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. This is listed in WERM III but not II, so was presumably issued in 1952 or 1953. Paul Sacher's importance for 20th century music is considerable, on account of the numerous works he commissioned from some of the greatest composers of the day. He premièred all these works with his Basle Chamber Orchestra but recorded precious few of them, raising the doubt whether, as a conductor, he was more than just about competent. In my Forgotten Artists series I had the occasion to compare his recording of Honegger's *Cantate de Noël* with that under Georges Tzipine and found Sacher's version amounted to little more than holding his forces together. Sacher's career in the recording studio was mainly devoted to baroque and early classical works that posed no great technical challenges.

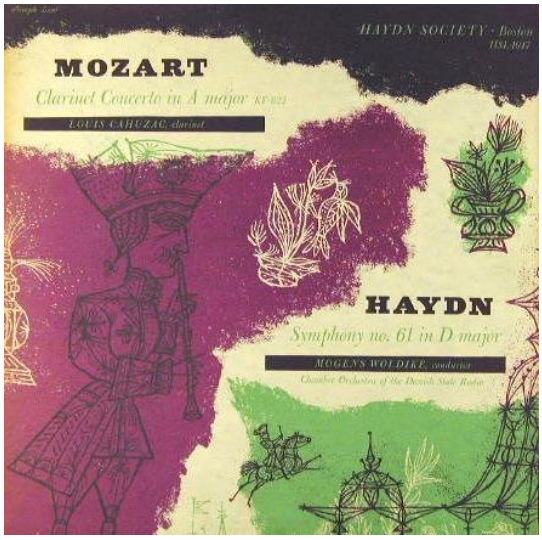
In the first movement of the symphony he can certainly drive things along with plenty of vitality, though the character that emerges is generic compared with Maerzendorfer. First repeat only. His second movement is slowish and he seems unwilling to insist on really soft playing. It comes across as a little humdrum and it is difficult to feel very sorry when, having taken the first two repeats, he omits all the others except, for some strange reason, the last but one. His Minuet and Trio manage to be more alive than Dorati's. He plays Finale C and manages a lively, effervescent account of it, though things sag a little in the softer sections. He takes the repeat. Still, if you want to hear Finale C and do not like HIP performances, Sacher will be a useful supplement to Maerzendorfer. Finale C was also played in the old Fendler recording – at an almost rabid lick.

Symphony no. 53	I	II	III	IV A	IV B	IV C	TT
Maerzendorfer	7:32	6:31	4:26	4:36	4:06	-	27:13
Dorati	7:38	6:33	4:53	-	4:21	-	23:27
Sacher	6:39	5:23	4:18	-	-	4:33	20:54

If **Symphony no. 61 in D** had been the only one Haydn wrote, it would be played again and again. Rarely before Dvořák can there have been such a joyfully open-air first movement. The pulsating wind in the second theme surely mark unprecedented sonorities. Only the first part of this quite ambitious movement is repeated – **Maerzendorfer** takes this repeat. He is wonderfully eager and bracing throughout. The Adagio breathes much of the same air as the second movement of Beethoven's Second Symphony. Maerzendorfer manages to express deep feeling at a flowing tempo. He does not play the repeat – a pity. Marvellous lilt in his Minuet. He allows the Trio to go a little slower, though with such affection it never sags. At the pause, the oboe is allowed to improvise a little cadenza the second time round. The Finale is an infectious dance on the village green. Maerzendorfer ensures that our spirits stay high.

Dorati plays the first movement with a lighter touch, but this is exhilarating too in its way. He is fully appreciative of the beauties of the Adagio. Like Maerzendorfer, he seemingly does not appreciate it quite enough to play the repeat. Dorati begins the Minuet with a very light touch. In truth, Haydn marks no dynamics at the beginning, though Robbins Landon added *forte* editorially. That is what

Maerzendorfer does, and the fullish orchestration seems on the side of Robbins Landon and Maerzendorfer. Dorati is actually very charming except that, as so often, what strikes one as affectionate grace at first comes to sound like an almighty strong accent on the first beat of every bar as the music goes on. This certainly happens when the Minuet returns after the Trio. This time Dorati plays it *forte*, and it feels awfully dogged. At Dorati's slower tempo, the Trio can go at the same speed, if this matters for you. Dorati conveys less delight and the oboe is not conceded a cadenza. Dorati starts the finale so breathlessly fast that he has to relax here and there. Somehow, this approach squeezes out of the music the wonderful village festival feeling that Maerzendorfer evoked.



This symphony was first recorded – so far as I know – by **Mogens Wöldike** with the Danish Radio Chamber Orchestra for the Haydn Society. The Danish conductor Mogens Wöldike (1897-1988) was a major force in the discovery of Haydn's earlier symphonies, having set down a number of firsts from the pre-war years onward. Later, he famously made for Vanguard, with the Vienna State Opera Orchestra, the first set of the last six London symphonies using the Robbins Landon editions. These recordings were notable for high energy levels though some felt they were a little short on poetry. This recording of Symphony no. 61 was first listed in WERM II, so an issue date of 1951 or 1952 is presumable. It must be said that, fine and musicianly though Wöldike is, he does not perceive that the first movement can transcend its time and place. His steadier approach is lively and nicely turned, but it belongs to the stately home rather than to the great outdoors. He plays the first repeat. His *Adagio*, too, is a tad slower then Maerzendorfer's or Dorati's, but here his obvious feeling for the music is all to the good. Like the others, he omits the repeat. Wöldike scores a real success with the Minuet, which bounces along delightfully. He does not slacken his tempo for the Trio, but is a little plain here. Not only is the oboe not allowed a cadenza, it does not even play the written trill. Wöldike's finale is slower than Maerzendorfer's, but with plenty of lift to the playing this proves preferable to rushing it off its feet, Dorati-style. Comparison between Wöldike and Dorati is rather a case of swings and roundabouts, but why bother when Maerzendorfer comfortably surpasses both of them?

Symphony no. 61	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	7:35	6:55	4:54	3:38	23:03
Dorati	7:06	7:08	5:21	3:25	23:01
Wöldike	8:39	7:45	4:19	3:46	24:31

Symphony no. 78 in C minor is one of three Haydn wrote for a trip to London that fell through – about a decade before the famous visit he actually did make. The theme of the first movement has been suggested as a prototype for Mozart's C minor piano concerto. The Haydn theme is blunter, the mood fiercer, almost protesting. **Maerzendorfer** is strong, with a striding forward movement. As so often, his pungent oboes make the textures sound fuller than you might expect. First repeat only. The *Adagio* has drama as well as warmth. Haydn marks both halves to be repeated. Maerzendorfer repeats only the first part, but gives a strongly felt performance. Unexpectedly, the Minuet and Trio are in the major key. The Minuet has a certain pomposity, which Maerzendorfer lightens with a

touch of perkiness. Here and in the Trio, he makes the most of the piquant orchestration. The finale returns to the minor key, though the major wins through in the end. Maerzendorfer does not exaggerate the *Presto* marking, investing the minor key sections with a degree of bitterness and finding a wistful grace in the major sections.

Dorati seems to take the view that Haydn in a minor key does not mean what he says. He imposes an elegant gentility on the music. There are places where Haydn himself does not let him get away with it and, taken on its own terms, it is nicely turned. But it makes the music sound much less important than in Maerzendorfer's hands. Dorati's *Adagio*, too, is a blandly *galante* affair, the more dramatic moments swept under the carpet. It is not surprising he makes no repeats – the impression is that the piece did not interest him much. The entrance of the C major Minuet comes, in Marzendorfer's performance, as a rude shock. Dorati's Minuet has a tripping elegance. Coming after a much less deeply felt *Adagio*, it does not surprise at all. This is not one of Dorati's plodding minuets, but he does not differentiate the character of the Trio. Dorati's finale is his best movement though even here, he seems to want to show, by keeping the minor key sections light and smiling, that minor keys do not really mean anything in particular to Haydn. Still, if the whole symphony had been as good as this movement, it would have been a decent performance as opposed to a wilfully uncomprehending one.

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN—Symphony No. 77 in B Flat; Symphony No. 78 in C Minor
Concert Hall Symphony Orchestra Conducted by Henry Swoboda

Haydn wrote his first symphony in 1759, when Mozart was in his infancy. In this symphony besides strings he orchestrated for only two oboes and two horns, which were employed in much the same manner as wind instruments were used by Bach, Handel and their contemporaries—as reinforcements for strings.

Forty years later Haydn's symphonic orchestra had grown to the point where it included strings, two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets and kettle drums. As significant as was this increase in the number of instruments Haydn used in symphonic writing, infinitely more important were the numerous changes he brought about in style, development of thematic treatment, and integration and extension of structural forms.

In Haydn's hands the orchestra improved considerably as a unit. With the exception of the clarinet, however, he employed no new instruments. At first he used woodwinds just as Bach and Handel had, purely in support of the strings. His use of brass was always conservative, particularly in his early symphonies. Percussion instruments were chiefly for novelty, except in the case of kettle drums, which he employed to increase the effectiveness of climaxes.

Haydn's development as a symphonist represents not only a triumph of form and content over what had been done before his time, but the very emancipation of the symphony as a medium of instrumental writing. Erroneously, he is often called the father of the symphony and string quartet. Yet, he originated neither of these forms. Innumerable less successful composers had tried their hands at both of these forms, and vast quantities of their works were relegated to the dust heap because none sustained the sparks of originality and craftsmanship that were part of Haydn's genius.

The Symphony No. 77 in B-Flat Major was written before 1782, during Haydn's so-called fourth period (1778-1780). The symphony opens with a spirited *Allegro* containing a middle section with a kind of stretto mastrale (a brief imitation) of the first bar of the main theme in which all the string and woodwind instruments join. While this movement introduces a contrasting second subject, at the end both subsidiary subject and epilogue are derived from the main idea.

The second movement, an *Adagio*, is characteristically lyrical and rich melodically. Next come a Menuetto and short Trio, and the symphony ends with a brilliant finale in quick tempo.

The Symphony No. 78 in C Minor also dates from before 1782. Scored for flutes, bassoons, horns and strings, it opens with a Fiesco movement containing a robust theme in triple time played by viola and strings in unison.

The second movement is an *Adagio* in which the major theme is set forth by the strings with the winds supporting and later joining in the development. Then comes a Menuetto-Trio movement involving a gay, energetic peasant dance typically Croatian in style. The symphony concludes with a spirited finale in rapid time.

Henry Swoboda has directed major orchestras in musical capitals throughout Europe. For nearly ten years Dr. Swoboda was program director and conductor for the Prague Broadcasting Corporation. A distinguished interpreter of music from every age, he has championed the works of outstanding contemporary composers and has unearthed many long-neglected classical masterpieces for performance in the concert hall and on records.

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(CHC-29)

HAYDN—Symphony No. 77 in B-Flat; Symphony No. 78 in C Minor

(CHC-30)

HAYDN—Symphony No. 77 in B-Flat; Symphony No. 78 in C Minor

I originally intended to make just one earlier comparison, **Laszlo Somogyi**, since I had already mentioned the first recording of all, by the Concert Hall Symphony Orchestra under **Henry Swoboda**, in my article on this conductor in my Forgotten Artists series. However, I see I discussed this latter so fleetingly as to be almost useless, so I have listened to it again. This Concert Hall recording is listed in WERM I and so was in existence by April 1950. Swoboda takes a terse, biting view of the first movement – so terse as to omit both repeats, but what remains is certainly highly effective. He keeps the *Adagio* on the move and does not underplay its more dramatic moments. No repeats. His Minuet is strong, very similar to Maerzendorfer's. Swoboda tears into the finale, obtaining a biting, protesting tone in the minor key moments. The major key episodes sound a bit uncomfortable at this speed and there are times when the orchestra can hardly keep up. As testimony to the shoe-string nature of the operation, a serious horn blooper in the second movement was not remade. This fiery performance did yeoman's service in its day. It was superseded by Maerzendorfer but certainly not by Dorati.

The Hungarian conductor Laszlo Somogyi (1907-1988) emigrated to the west after the Hungarian uprising and made a good career in the USA, including a period with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. He made some recordings for Westminster in the 1966, most famously the Dvořák Piano Concerto with Firkusny and Beethoven's Choral Fantasia with the young Daniel Barenboim. His coupling of Haydn's symphonies 22 and 78 was issued in 1966.

Somogyi is broader than Maerzendorfer in the first movement but, while it is all very nicely turned, he does not reduce its stature, as Dorati did, with an excess of elegance. It is a strong reading with a touch of majesty to it. Somogyi makes both repeats. Somogyi is a little more mobile than Maerzendorfer in the *Adagio* and, like him, he makes just the first repeat. His phrasing is intense and varied and he certainly does not underplay the drama. Somogyi's Minuet is a fairly lightly dancing affair, with a certain wistful quality in the Trio. His finale is relatively speedy but superbly controlled, so that the biting minor and the elegant major elements are finely balanced. This performance has a subtlety that will surely make it more rewarding even than Maerzendorfer's, let alone the other two. I am not sure that it is not a great performance.

Symphony no. 78	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	5:37	8:59	4:08	4:28	23:14
Dorati	5:36	6:12	3:48	4:01	19:39
Swoboda	3:54	4:58	4:10	3:15	16:19
Somogyi	8:24	8:38	3:49	4:05	24:58

Symphony no. 83 in G minor, known as "**La Poule**", is the second of the "Paris Symphonies". It opens in terse, even passionate minor key vein, with fierce dotted rhythms. This gives way to the clucking theme which gave rise to the nickname. The odd thing is that, at a certain point in the recapitulation, Haydn seems to say "that's enough minor key music for one symphony" and finishes in rollicking major key mood. The following *Andante* is relatively elegant while the Minuet and Trio and the Finale are both in good-humoured major key mood. Haydn's sudden switch to the major in the first movement would be more ambivalent, of course, if the conductor plunged us back into the minor by taking the second repeat. **Maerzendorfer** doesn't – he gives only the first. In other respects this is a trenchant performance, appreciative of the clucking second subject without overdoing it. Where Maerzendorfer is unusual is in his treatment of the repeated quavers in the second movement. Haydn has marked staccato dots over them, but has also put bowing slurs over them. For most conductors, this means he wants them to be sufficiently separate for us to hear single notes, not just one sustained note, but not really separated. Maerzendorfer has them played strictly staccato. It is as though he is taking the "Hen" analogy into this movement too. Played this way, they do indeed suggest clucking hens. Once I had got used to it, I found it rather attractive. No repeats. Maerzendorfer's Minuet is solid but with enough lilt not to be stolid. He has the flute play very staccato in the Trio. Is he thinking of the hen even here? His finale is vital and vigorous at a not especially fast speed. I would have perhaps preferred a little more dash, but it is far from flat-footed. He plays both repeats. I must note with disapproval his shortening of the rest before the return of the principal theme in the second part.

Dorati's slightly broader tempo for the first movement allows him to strike a pathetic, rather than passionate note. This could be interesting, but his placing of accents sounds pedantic at times. First repeat only. He takes the customary smoother view of the repeated quavers in the second movement. I'm coming to the view that Maerzendorfer may be right. This movement does not, after all, dig particularly deep, so it gains from Maerzendorfer's droll humour. Dorati follows this with a

Minuet so flabby as to raise the doubt that he is trying to making the music boring deliberately. His finale is better, decently lively but less forceful than Maerzendorfer. He does count out the rest before the recapitulation, but Maerzendorfer is otherwise more impressive. Only the first repeat from Dorati.

The first recording of this symphony, so far as I know, was made in 1953 by **Sir John Barbirolli** and the Hallé Orchestra (HMV ALP 1038). Haydn did not figure largely in Barbirolli's recorded repertoire, but he evidently loved this symphony greatly, for at least two later live versions have circulated – with the Hallé again at the Proms in 1965 and in Naples in 1968.

Barbirolli's tempo for the first movement is about the same as Dorati's, but there is the hand of the master in the way he characterizes each theme, from fierce passion to clucking delight and sheer exuberance. All this without stretching the basic pulse. First repeat only. Unsurprisingly, Barbirolli is smooth with the repeated quavers in the second movement. A few touches of portamento in the strings were still lingering on as late as 1953. Old-fashioned this may be, but he does not dawdle over-lovingly, rather creating a Gluckian vision of Elysian fields. No repeats. The Minuet and Trio is about as slow as Dorati's, but there is a smiling grace that makes it work, and some lovely pointing from the flute. The second repeat is missing from the Minuet. The finale is terrific, taken at a tarantella-like speed with infectious rhythm and all the verve of a live performance. First repeat only. This has to be one of the great Haydn symphony performances on record.

Not so long before Barbirolli conducted this symphony in Naples, in 1965, another British conductor, **Denis Vaughan**, made a complete set of the "Paris" symphonies in Naples for RCA. The orchestra was described, for contractual reasons, simply as the Naples Orchestra, but it was of course the Alessandro Scarlatti Orchestra of the RAI. Vaughan had been Beecham's chorus master but emerged from the shadows in the decade or so following Beecham's death. He also recorded a Schubert cycle in Naples. He does not obtain Barbirolli's detailed phrasing but there is a feeling of musicianly enjoyment to the first movement. First repeat only. He goes for smooth quavers in the second movement and takes a slower tempo than any of the other three, definitely a relaxed six-in-a-bar. He also takes the first repeat. This extra music would have been more welcome from Maerzendorfer, let alone Barbirolli, but I have to say that in the later stages Vaughan does inspire the orchestra to playing of considerable expressiveness and a hint of the sublime. Unfortunately, things fall off after this. The Minuet and Trio is soggy and plodding and in the finale his stolid tempo seems to be deliberately restraining his players from the sort of glorious tarantella they would probably have supplied if left to their own devices. First repeat only. This is one of those Haydn symphonies

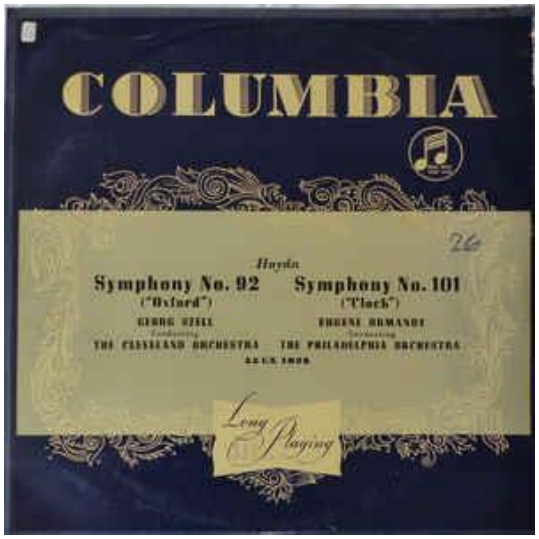
that would last at least 35 minutes if every repeat was played. There's a tad more life here than in Dorati, but it pales before Maerzendorfer while Barbirolli is in a class of his own.

Symphony no. 83	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	6:52	5:58	4:14	6:16	23:20
Dorati	7:44	5:47	4:29	4:04	22:06
Barbirolli	7:32	6:46	3:22	3:33	21:15
Vaughan	7:33	11:17	4:23	4:34	27:50

Symphony no. 92 in G major is known as the "**Oxford**" and Haydn did indeed conduct it there on the occasion of receiving his doctorate *honoris causa*. It was not actually new – the rather hastily arranged doctorate did not give him time to write a new work, so he offered a piece which had been played successfully in Paris not long before.

Maerzendorfer impresses immediately by the depth and tenderness with which he expresses the slow introduction, though he manages to do this without any sense of false romanticism. The ensuing *Allegro spiritoso* has a wonderful fiery spirit, alternating with perky good humour. There are some untidy moments, but never mind. The usual forward wind bring plenty of colour to the proceedings. The repeat is taken. Maerzendorfer's *Adagio cantabile* is both broad and deep. When the flute or the oboe take up the main theme they sound as if they have just discovered the music. The middle section is by turns forcefully dramatic and grimly good-humoured. The Minuet and Trio are fairly slow, but with a rustic lilt that makes them delightful. The finale may not be the fastest performance you have ever heard – though it is not so very slow either – but it has the most wonderful verve. The repeat is played. This is one of Maerzendorfer's finest hours.

Taken on its own, **Dorati's** slightly more formal first movement is lively enough, and Haydn himself tends to take over to ensure enjoyment. In the second movement, Dorati's insistence on shallow elegance reduces the scope of the movement and his central section jogs along uncomprehendingly. Dorati's Minuet and Trio goes at about the same tempo as Maerzendorfer's but it sags in various places. In the finale, as in the first movement, Haydn himself rather saves the day, yet there is always the feeling that Dorati is saying "this is 18th century music so we mustn't let ourselves go". Whereas Maerzendorfer, being more naturally at home in this sort of music, shows that you can let yourself go without breaking the bounds of the style.



One of **George Szell's** first records with the Cleveland Orchestra was an "Oxford" symphony, set down in 1949. Szell's Haydn is all about scrubbed-clean discipline – not a bad thing in itself, of course – combined with jabbing accents and hairpin crescendos-diminuendos with which he breaks the flow of anything remotely lyrical. Just sometimes, he lets the orchestra play for a few bars and some sense of continuity, even enjoyment, begins to take over. But then he is back to punching and pummelling the music, worrying every tiny phrase. This is not music for a control freak and I found it most unpleasant. He takes the repeat in the first movement but cuts second repeats in the minuet and Trio and that in the finale. Probably this was necessary to fit each movement onto a 78 side.

A much more enjoyable performance was set down in 1956 by the Orchestra Alessandro Scarlatti di Napoli in 1956 under its longstanding principal conductor, **Franco Caracciolo**. The year is significant, because this orchestra came under the umbrella of RAI, Italian Radio, only at the end of 1956. Up till then, since its foundation in 1948, it had given a six-month season in Naples and spent the other six months touring Italy and abroad. It garnered a good international reputation and made a number of recordings, including this for EMI (Columbia CX 1378). Its adoption by the RAI gave it a more provincial base. The need for a typical radio orchestra to virtually sight-read a wide range of little-known material from the baroque to the contemporary meant that standards sometimes descended to the rough and ready, though Caracciolo's capacity to produce lively and sympathetic performances of practically everything in sight has never been sufficiently appreciated. In the end, RAI did not even provide it with long-term security. As is famously known, the bureaucratic powers decided in the 1990s that culture didn't pay and must therefore go. Maybe the orchestra would still be with us if it had remained independent.

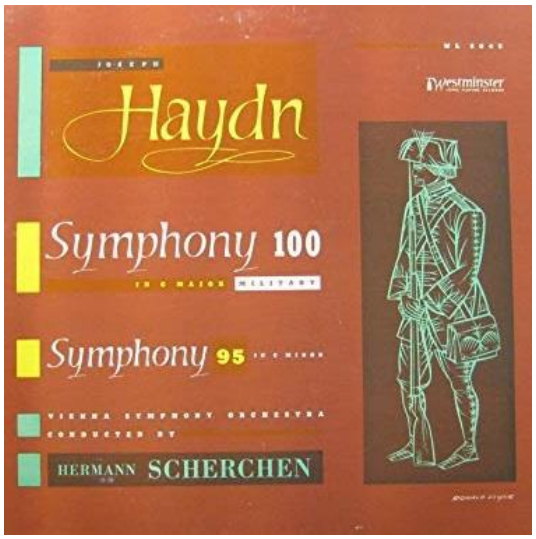
Caracciolo gives a lively and affectionate performance, a tad less punchy than Maerzendorfer – let alone Szell – and with a good feeling for the long line. There is an attractive singing quality to the second movement, where the central section is strong but not overly dramatic. Caracciolo perhaps obtains a better lilt to the Minuet and, especially, the syncopated Trio, than any of the other three. I am amazed to see that it is actually slower than Dorati – it doesn't feel that way. The finale scampers away irresistibly – unfortunately the repeat is missing. All other repeats in the symphony are played. I wondered if the length of early LP sides dictated this, but in a live performance from 1963 – and at an even more zippy tempo – Caracciolo still omitted this repeat. I wouldn't necessarily prefer this to Maerzendorfer, but I shall return to it gratefully.

Symphony no. 92	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	7:15	7:49	6:07	4:57	26:10
Dorati	7:45	6:45	6:11	5:38	26:21
Szell 1949	7:43	7:13	3:59	4:17	23:14
Caracciolo	7:23	7:25	6:17	4:09	25:16

In the first movement of **Symphony no. 95 in C minor**, **Maerzendorfer** does not overplay the tragedy and maintains a fine balance between the grim minor key moments and the uneasy calm of the contrasting major. The repeat is taken. He takes a broad tempo for the second movement, finding a wonderful depth of intimate expression. He distils an extraordinary sense of numbed tragedy from the Minuet. His solo cellist in the Trio is no more than adequate. Maerzendorfer takes the finale very fast, but enters as if on tiptoe, not daring to assert too much jollity after the preceding tragedy. He then builds the movement up splendidly and is marvellous when pummelling minor chords threaten to reassert the tragic mood of the first and third movements. This, to my ears, is a great performance.

Dorati is fairly effective in the first movement. Only a certain feeling that he is spelling it out self-consciously lessens the impact. The drawback here is the second movement, where Dorati finds only

bland elegance, even in the minor key section. His Minuet shows awareness of its tragic character, though he finds an inappropriate elegance where he can. His solo cellist in the Trio does a neat job. Dorati's finale seems a little reined in. It builds up fairly well, but he underplays the subversive elements.



The conductor who, before Maerzendorfer and Dorati, recorded the largest number of Haydn symphonies seems to have been **Hermann Scherchen**. Apart from making the first complete set of the "London" Symphonies, he recorded seven of the earlier works. Symphony no. 95 was set down in 1950 with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra for Westminster. Scherchen takes a broad and stern view of the first movement, though omitting the repeat, drawing Beethovenian drama from the small forces. He does not over-point the charm in the second subject, but when, in the recapitulation, this theme returns in C major and C minor is finally dispelled – at least for this movement – the music truly enters the Elysian fields. These are the sort of blinding revelations that Scherchen could produce. His second movement is quite slow, with detailed, intimate phrasing, but also a feeling of great depth. Six bars are cut before the minor key episode – maybe this derives from the old Breitkopf edition rather than Scherchen's own scissors? The minor key music is given with great depth, yet entirely without sentimentality. The Minuet is given a grimly tragic stride. In the trio, the solo cellist is given space to shape his music with wonderful grace. The finale enters gently but builds up terrifically, the minor key outburst near the end threatening to engulf the proceedings entirely. Two bars are cut just before the end – again, this may be Breitkopf's decision rather than Scherchen's. There's greatness on offer here, no doubt about it.

And so is there, I would say, in the 1954 performance set down for HMV by **Vittorio Gui** and the Glyndebourne Festival Orchestra – actually the Royal Philharmonic. Decisions by recording impresarios have seen to it that Gui is remembered as an Italian conductor of Italian opera. He was equally active in the concert hall and was a great interpreter of Brahms, Debussy, Ravel, Richard Strauss and much more. A fair quantity of his work, operatic and orchestral, is conserved by RAI though, as far as Haydn symphonies go, I am aware only of a 1966 Naples performance of no. 44. He also recorded no. 60 for HMV.

I am not sure how many editions of this symphony existed before Robbins Landon, but Gui does not seem to be using the same one as Scherchen. The cuts are not made, but Gui's edition omits the tiny solo contributions from the solo violin towards the end of the first movement. Gui's first movement is not far different from Scherchen's – and he, too, omits the repeat. He gives the music a powerfully Beethovenian ring, but is a little more affectionate with the second theme. Like Scherchen, he enters the Elysian fields when the music finally turns to C major. Gui is a little more 18th century in feel in the second movement, but finds

much tender, noble feeling and an almost religious solemnity for the minor key section. His Minuet has a certain lilt even in the face of tragedy. In the Trio, the solo cello is a tad plainer than Scherchen's at first, but warms to his task as he goes along. The finale begins lightly but soon becomes very fiery indeed. Gui is hardly less tremendous than Scherchen as the minor key attempts to dominate towards the end.

This is all the more remarkable considering that Gui's present fame would not lead one to expect anything of the sort. Scherchen is not exactly a household name, but he has always maintained a strong underground reputation and his live performances are sought far and wide. No less remarkable is the extent to which the two conductors, from vastly different backgrounds and with vastly different repertoires, converge in their interpretations of this symphony.

Symphony no. 95	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	7:11	6:29	5:39	3:31	22:51
Dorati	7:04	5:11	5:09	4:06	22:31
Scherchen	5:53	5:53	4:59	3:33	20:18
Gui	5:27	5:56	5:22	3:37	20:23

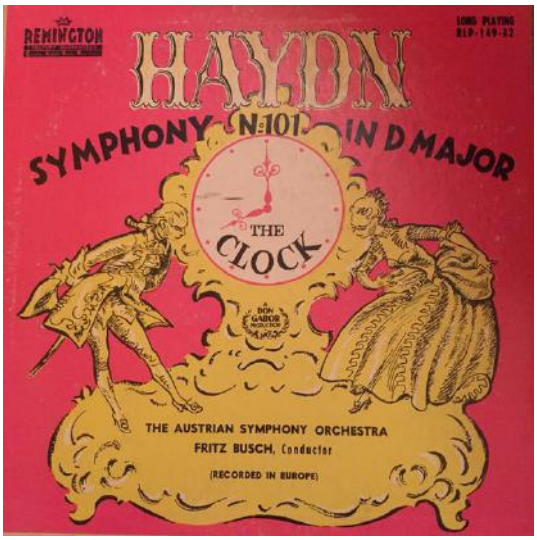
In the introduction to **Symphony no. 101 in D major** – the "**Clock**" – **Maerzendorfer** creates a feeling of considerable gravity. His forward wind, the oboe cutting through the textures, are proto-HIP. The *Presto* is no mere *Allegro*, it fizzes along with fire and ebullience, a marvellously tough, dramatic affair with timpani – hard sticks, I am sure – crashing away. There is only token relaxation in the softer moments. There is a marvellous open-air, festive feeling to it. The repeat is played. The *Andante* has the clock ticking very slowly, as much cheeky as humorous. There is great passion in the minor-key section without a hint of romantic fatness. The Minuet is brusque, even protesting in tone. The only neo is that the second repeat of the Trio, piquantly played, is omitted. Maezendorfer's omission or did the engineers cut it because of the length? The finale is tough, terse and sizzling. What a pity about that repeat, for it is a terrific performance.

Dorati's more string-based textures make for a less striking introduction, but he does generate a certain mystery. In the *Presto* his timpani are predictably well-behaved. Still, it all scampers along quite infectiously, and some may feel that Haydn has no business to be doing any more than that. The repeat is taken. Certainly, Dorati's considerably swifter tempo for the *Andante* is more in line with the "Papa Haydn" image. The trouble is that in the minor-key episode, where Haydn breaks bounds but where Dorati doesn't think he's that sort of composer, things get humdrum. The Minuet has a nice lilt, but it's a very formal, courtly affair compared with Maerzendorfer. We do at least get the second repeat in the Trio. The finale spins along quite nicely, but this is such an unchallenging performance alongside Maerzendorfer. OK if you feel Haydn is a second-rate composer for well-heeled society ladies to smile indulgently at. You may feel I am being excessively vitriolic, but in some ways a well-groomed performance like this is more insidious than a patently bad one, since it may lead people to suppose there really is no more to the music than Dorati gives us.

This symphony's recorded history goes back to at least 2 May 1927, when Sir Hamilton Harty set it down with the Hallé Orchestra. Toscanini, with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, followed in 1929. I have looked, though, for my comparisons, at two of the less celebrated performances from the 1950s.

Erich Leinsdorf's recording with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra was taped on 21 March 1955. Even those who complain – not always wrongly – of a certain didactic rigidness to Leinsdorf's work usually allow that the handful of LPs from his Rochester years marked one of his happiest phases. Strangely, with the chromatic harmonies halfway through the first page of the introduction, we can actually hear Leinsdorf the feeling musician take over from Leinsdorf the disciplined technician. The first half of the page is finely drawn, evenly paced, but then Leinsdorf allows himself some flexible shaping of the chromatic moment and, the feeling musician having been turned on, it is never switched off. The first movement, with repeat, is upfront and urgent, but with plenty of dynamic shading and a degree of affectionate drawing back here and there. The second movement is not "shocking" like Maerzendorfer's, but there is a tensile quality beneath its elegance, and Haydn gets his full weight in the minor key section. The Minuet has a slow lilt with an almost hymn-like fullness, while the Trio, with all repeats, is alternately hesitant and perky. The finale has terrific dash, but with plenty of shaping in the gentler moments – there is no hint of just barging through. A less original performance than Maerzendorfer's, but at least as fine in its way.

An influential recording conductor before the war, for some reason **Fritz Busch**'s post-war career was confined to smaller companies. He set this symphony down for Remington in 1950 with something described as the Austrian Symphony Orchestra – maybe the hardworking Vienna Symphony Orchestra moonlighting yet again.



The very flexible – and highly effective – moulding of the introduction implies deeper romantic roots than the other performances. The body of the movement has a springy, feel-good air to it. This seemingly harks back to the days when Haydn was considered an uncomplicated composer, but the sheer joy of it all is irresistible. The repeat is played. The clock ticks slowly and elegantly, but Busch achieves considerable grandeur in the minor key section. Perhaps for lack of groove space, the second repeat in the first section is missing. The Minuet and Trio – with all repeats – are surprisingly similar in concept to Leinsdorf's, especially in the hymn-like grandeur of the Minuet. I did feel, though, that Leinsdorf is more successful in keeping it alive – under Busch it sags here and there. No sagging in Busch's fiery, exuberant finale. Again, the upfront concept is similar to Leinsdorf's – something I wouldn't have expected. Leinsdorf does have the better orchestra, though. Busch's performance is especially valuable, I would say, for its first movement.

Symphony no. 101	I	II	III	IV	TT
Maerzendorfer	8:14	9:50	6:00	4:33	28:38
Dorati	8:19	7:32	8:22	5:15	29:29
Leinsdorf	7:47	7:24	7:59	4:24	27:36
Busch F.	8:19	6:51	8:44	4:24	28:19

The Maerzendorfer-Dorati pattern observed in my previous article would seem to be confirmed. With the sole exception of no. 7 – more because Maerzendorfer is slightly disappointing than because Dorati is especially good – Maerzendorfer emerges as preferable throughout. Moreover, he rises to the occasion in the later symphonies, producing results that approach greatness. Sometimes the differences seem small, but in reality an abyss separates them. The Haydn presented by Dorati is a very nice composer. In Maerzendorfer's hands, Haydn lives and breathes as a great composer.

The other point to emerge, though, is that, where a previous recording existed, neither Maerzendorfer nor Dorati necessarily improved upon it, except for a cleaner text. This need not surprise us when the earlier recording was conducted by an acknowledged "great" – Beecham, Barbirolli, Busch or Scherchen. Gui and Leinsdorf probably belong to this list, while the case seems to be made for re-examination of several other conductors met along the way, notably Haas, Somogyi and Caracciolo.

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The previous article discussed recordings by Maerzendorfer and Dorati of Symphonies 5, 9, 23, 38, 42, 56, 62, 75, 84, 89, 94, 104.