

Quartet in C op 74 no. 1
Allegro moderato
Andantino grazioso
Menuetto: Allegretto
Finale: Vivace

Haydn
(1732 - 1809)

The three quartets op. 74 were written after Haydn's first visit to London in 1791, which followed the death of his patron Nicholas Esterházy, and before his second visit in 1794. Both sets of quartets, op. 71 and 74, were dedicated to Count Anton Apponyi, a relation by marriage of the Esterházy, and perhaps Haydn had in mind the brilliant violinist and impresario Salomon, who organised both visits, and with his quartet gave performances of the works in London. They certainly bridge the gap between the more intimate works that he had written for Austrian connoisseurs and the more brilliant works intended for the concert hall.

All the op. 74 quartets have an introduction. The opening "call to arms" of this first quartet, sets the tone of the first movement, which is monothematic, with a very free recapitulation which treats the theme fugally. It is unusual to find Haydn writing a second movement which is intended as a dance, even if a stately one. Here it is the viola which keeps things moving, while the pairs of instruments sing around it, and the first violin adds embroidery towards the end. The third movement is another dance, a rumbustious minuet with a wrong-footing moment, and a naïve trio in A major. The finale is chicken-pecking (marked *staccato assai!*), exploding into brilliant semi-quavers, and cello drones, before the triumphant ending.

Last ACMC Performance: the Lochrian Quartet, February, 1983

Quartet in G minor op. 74 no. 3
Allegro
Largo assai
Menuetto: Allegretto
Finale: Allegro con brio

Haydn
(1732 - 1809)

The "introduction" here is in the same time, but is separated from the

main movement by a general pause. The main theme, said to resemble a bouncing rider, is in triple-time triplets, and is complemented by a second, quiet theme, with big upward leaps and dotted rhythms. A complete contrast is provided by the second movement, in the remote key of E major, where the instruments move together, in harmonies that pre-figure late Beethoven. There is a central section in the minor where the cello provides momentum, and the first violin eventually decorates the melody. A minuet follows, in G major, with a trio in G minor. The final movement is a romp for everybody, this time galloping and contrapuntal. The first violin soars to the rafters, and there are hesitations and pauses, before the movement finishes with a final return to the major key and a happy ending.

Last ACMC Performance: the Endellion Quartet, October 1985