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in Haydn's Quartets

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**The “Rhetorical Pause” and Metaphors of
Conversation in Haydn’s Quartets**

Most writers have taken conversation as a more or less self-evident metaphor for Haydn’s string quartets, applying this trope both to the players and to the music they create—or recreate. The medium becomes synonymous with the discourse in such a characterization, which stresses the intimacy of equals at ease, spontaneous yet respectful of the particular interests of the others. In this private circle, in which the players and listeners are by turns one and the same, each is equally responsible to the whole, listening and deferring to the current and changeable leading voice, curbing soloistic display, cultivating a spirit of cooperation in working for the common good—in short a self-governing if privileged democracy.

Eighteenth-century writers paid the string quartet a great compliment in comparing it to an activity that was central to the lives of the leisured classes. As an instrument of both intimacy and delight, the art of conversation provided opportunities for the display of wit, sympathy, and good breeding; it also promoted shared interests and learning, and consolidated communities of artists and intellectuals—all qualities that contributed to the enjoyment of playing string quartets in Haydn’s day. But if this is to be a useful trope for musical discourse that engages listeners beyond that inner circle of players, we need to allow the audience a more active role than one of eavesdropping from the periphery. Elsewhere I have argued that Haydn’s strategies in the Op. 33 string quartets, especially in their opening and closing movements, offer a way to extend the metaphor’s application to key aspects of the composer’s style and manner of address to the listener.¹ Haydn’s often provocative wit in these quartets invites and, indeed, challenges listeners to become actively engaged in the music’s unfolding. I think it is something like this that we hope for in our musical experience generally, and we

¹ Gretchen Wheelock, *Haydn’s Ingenious Jesting with Art*, New York 1992. – On the Opus 33 Quartets, see chapters 1 and 4. See also Wheelock, *Engaging Strategies in Haydn’s Opus 33 String Quartets*, in: *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 25/1 (Fall 1991), pp. 1–30; translated as: *Strategie di coinvolgimento nei Quartetti Op. 33*, in: *Haydn*, ed. by Andrea Lanza, Bologna 1999, pp. 31–66.

represent our ideal of an inclusive and intimate encounter in the metaphor of conversation.

I wonder, though, if the metaphor hasn't become a bit too comfortable, too routine. At the risk of seeming to take metaphors too literally—they are figures of speech, after all, meant to be suggestive of similarities rather than accountable for differences—I do nevertheless want to probe those differences a bit and explore what it is that we elide in speaking of the quartet as conversation. I also hope to persuade you that the rhetorical pause offers a model for filling in the gaps, so to speak, between the metaphor of conversation and a more inclusive account of the interaction between players and listeners.

Let me turn first to some areas that I find problematic in our use of the conversation metaphor. First, its application in musical analysis is highly selective. Regarding the quartet cycle as a whole, conversation seems a better analogy for the motivic work of sonata-style movements than for the aria-like monologues and fantasias that unfold in many of Haydn's slow movements, or the kinaesthetic upsets in many of his Minuet movements and dance-like Finales. In general, these less conversational aspects of the medium are elided in analysis that favors the textures of motivic exchange in opening movements, most especially their developmental episodes.

From a historical perspective, we have also been rather selective. The model often assumed in investigations of chamber music's conversations is that of the eighteenth-century French salon, where sparkling and amusing exchanges among mixed company were presided over by brilliant and fashionable hostesses.² It seems reasonable, though, to question the stability of this model, both in Haydn's day and in relation to our understanding of its implications for his string quartets. Given the range of venues, performers, and listeners in which quartets were played and heard, should we not consider a comparable variety of contexts,

² See, for example, Barbara R. Hanning, *Conversation and Musical Style in the Late Eighteenth-Century Salon*, in: *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 22/4 (1989), pp. 512–28; and Elisabeth LeGuin, *Rehearsing Rhetoric in Joseph Haydn's Trios for Keyboard and Strings*, unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Atlanta, Georgia, November 17, 2001. – Anne-Louise Germaine de Staël, who recorded in 1808 her impressions of German literature, philosophy and social customs, offers interesting comments on the differences in French and German conversation in: *De l'Allemagne* (1811), part I, chapter 11: *De l'esprit de conversation*.

participants, and styles in conversation itself? I certainly can't address this admittedly rhetorical question here, but two examples can suggest the range of historical issues involved in relating conversation to string quartets.

Eighteenth-century writers on conversation certainly supported the ideals of spontaneity and equality of participation, ideals that have carried over into comparisons with the string quartet. But Peter Burke has shown that conversation manuals of the period, while advocating seeming spontaneity, also recommend study and practice, "to improve one's conversational performance."³ For those seeking to display good breeding, such manuals offered rules for properly deferential address to one's betters. They could also be consulted for lists of appropriate topics, examples of witty rejoinders, and sample conversations to practice. Some even suggested keeping a diary of choice phrases to introduce into one's conversation.⁴ Apart from documenting a history of helpful advice to those who wished to cultivate the art of conversation, the proliferation of such manuals would seem to suggest a certain disciplining of spontaneity and careful observance of the social hierarchy.

The discipline of study and practice arises as a marker of the changing status of the string quartet as well. Cambini's remarks in 1804 on "The Performance of Instrumental Quartets" make it clear that one of the distinctions of string quartets was the difficulty of playing them well—and for this rehearsal was necessary. He writes:

"The unity of feeling and expression, indispensable to the [quartet] musicians, does not happen by chance nor at the first read through."⁵

In fact, Cambini likens the musicians' responsibility to that of actors in a play:

"The best actor wouldn't dare to play a scene out of a significant play without frequent rehearsals."

In this sense of the genre as one requiring dedication to study and practice, the metaphor of conversation tilts toward one of

³ Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation*, Ithaca, N. Y., 1993, p. 92.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁵ Cited in: Ludwig Finscher, *Studien zur Geschichte des Streichquartetts*, vol. 1 (Saarbrücker Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, vol. 3), Kassel 1974, p. 297.

dramatistic re-enactment, a staging, as it were, of carefully rehearsed dialogues.

No doubt eighteenth-century chamber music had much in common with the social activity it initially accompanied and eventually displaced. But, as studies by Ludwig Finscher, Horst Walter, and others have shown, the relationship of participants in quartet playing was a changeable one, and in any case bore scant resemblance to performance settings today.⁶ For one thing, in Viennese circles devoted to quartet playing, amateurs were as likely to take part as professionals. In such gatherings, distinctions of musical ability superseded those of social status, at least temporarily. As one writer noted in 1810,

"[Quartet playing] makes equal and friendly everything that rank and connections had always kept separate [...] and men who have freely joined together and played in a quartet throughout one winter are good friends for life."⁷

Such encomiums resonate with our conversational ideal of equality, but they also remind us that the emerging ideal of intimacy in quartet playing involved an almost exclusively male society.⁸ Moreover, that society increasingly became one of connoisseurs, itself a sign of exclusivity—none more so, perhaps, than the coming together of professional musicians and composers. Although some quartet gatherings in late eighteenth-century Vienna openly welcomed strangers, those advertised as “open to participants only” confirm the sense of the quartet’s discourse as a privileged and self-enclosed conversation.⁹ One wonders if the discussions in such circles more closely resembled those in Masonic lodges than conversations in French salons nearly a century earlier.

Looked at from the musical side of the conversation, Haydn’s quartets themselves display an array of musical discourses re-

⁶ Finscher, *ibid.*; Horst Walter, *Zum Wiener Streichquartett der Jahre 1780 bis 1800*, in: *Haydn-Studien*, vol. VII/3–4 (1988), pp. 289–314. See also Mary Sue Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn’s Vienna*, Stuyvesant, N. Y., 1989; Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, Cambridge 1993.

⁷ Anonymous, *Über Quartettmusik*, in: *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, Jg. 12, no. 33 (May 16, 1810), col. 514.

⁸ In his *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag 1796* (facsimile ed.: Munich-Salzburg 1976), Johann Ferdinand Ritter von Schönfeld lists some sixty string players active in Vienna, two of whom were female (both violinists). Schönfeld’s account is translated by Kathrine Talbot in: *Haydn and His World*, ed. by Elaine R. Sisman, Princeton, N. J., 1997, pp. 289–320.

⁹ See Walter, *Zum Wiener Streichquartett*, pp. 292–95.

sponsive to various performance venues. Although we have little documentation of the particular string quartets played in private gatherings, and no evidence that any of Haydn's quartets were heard on a public concert in Vienna during his lifetime, some of these works were undoubtedly played in both aristocratic chambers and public concerts. As is well known, Haydn brought with him his Opp. 71 and 74 quartets on his return trip to London in 1794, works that were composed specifically for public performance and with first-hand knowledge of the London concert scene. According to Razumovsky, these quartets had been previously heard in Vienna, in the palace of their dedicatee, Count Apponyi.¹⁰ We can assume that others known to have been played on public concerts in London—quartets from Opp. 54 and 55 and Op. 64—were also played in private and semi-private circles of Vienna and London.¹¹ From the earliest divertimenti to his latest quartets, then, Haydn's approach to the genre developed alongside changing estimations and uses of the genre. No single model seems adequate to comprehend this diversity of conversations and participants in private and public venues.

Overall, though, my chief reservation about our use of the conversation metaphor is that it focuses attention almost exclusively on the discourse of the players and seldom takes other listeners into account. Perhaps as a consequence, musical analysis tends to elide the role of physical gesture in performance—the “body language,” as we call it, that is integral to communication in both conversation and string quartet playing. In general, we use the term “gesture” metaphorically in speaking of music, but in conversation, as in music-making, the physical presence of the company is essential to the process of interpreting meanings, where the mute cues of the body—posture, gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions—both produce and reflect understanding.

¹⁰ See Walter, p. 297.

¹¹ The title page of Longman & Broderip's publication of the Opus 54 and 55 quartets in 1789 announced that these works had been played in the Professional Concerts at the Hanover Square Rooms. At least one of the Op. 64 quartets was performed in March 1791 in the same concert as Haydn's symphonies, according to Simon McVeigh, *The Professional Concert and Rival Subscription Series in London, 1783–1793*, in: *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* 22 (1989), p. 98; on the performance of Op. 54 in 1789, see his *Concert Life in London*, p. 214.

Performative gestures and address to the listener are seldom the subjects of musical analysis—indeed they seem refractory to analysis. These are, however, subjects of interest to students of rhetoric. On the face of it, rhetoric would seem to have little in common with conversation. In its public mode of address, rhetoric is generally construed as the work of a single orator, whose impassioned speech is calculated to move an audience, both in the logical sequence of its argument and in the eloquence of its heightened language and delivery. Recent applications of rhetoric to late eighteenth-century music have focussed on the formal coherence of the “argument” in extended forms—the “wordless oration,” in Evan Bonds terms¹²—and on “figures,” whether they be the referential topoi investigated by Leonard Ratner and Wye Allanbrook, among others, or the processes of eloquent variation addressed by Elaine Sisman.¹³ Not surprising, studies of rhetorical delivery, such as those of George Barth and Vera Schwarz, have been concerned largely with solo repertoires.¹⁴

With respect to Haydn’s string quartets, I want to argue that the “wordless oration” is impoverished without the gestural language of the body, and that attention to music in performance can bring conversation and rhetoric closer together in addressing the interplay between players and listeners. Of particular interest here are the ways in which rhetorical gestures affect the conversation among the quartet players themselves and with those supposedly contingent listeners, the audience. In writing of Haydn’s London piano trios and quartets, Mary Hunter has argued that public and private styles in these works are not separate but, rather, “interrelated modes of reception [...] and comprehension,” which “function more as simultaneous and contrapuntal strands

¹² Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration*, Cambridge, Mass., 1991, p. 4.

¹³ Leonard B. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*, New York 1980; Wye J. Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, Chicago 1984; Elaine R. Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, Cambridge, Mass., 1993. On rhetorical topoi in relation to formal design, see Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*, Princeton, N. J., 1991.

¹⁴ George Barth, *The Pianist as Orator: Beethoven and the Transformation of Keyboard Style*, Ithaca, N. Y., 1992; Vera Schwarz, *Missverständnisse in der Haydn-Interpretation*, in: *Oesterreichische Musikzeitschrift*, Bd. 31/1 (1976), pp. 25–35; and: *Funktion und Interpretation der Pausen bei Beethoven*, in: *Beiträge* 76–78. *Oesterreichische Gesellschaft für Musik*. *Beethoven-Kolloquium* 1977, pp. 117–31. See also Sandra P. Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*, Bloomington, Ind., 1988, pp. 366–69.

of experience than as two poles on a single continuum.”¹⁵ This is a useful caveat, in considering the late quartets of Haydn, in relation to both style and venue of performance. But listening itself becomes a particular issue in public venues. For if there is a potential conflict between conversation and music, it is that the audience must abandon their own conversations and attend to that of the players. The rituals of modern-day concert-going regulate that transition, but if reports about historical listening practices in public concerts of eighteenth-century London are any indication, the music would need to attract the attention of listeners in order to be heard at all. László Somfai has written of the distinctively public gestures of Opp. 71 and 74, such as the “noise-killer” chords that call attention to the beginnings of several of these quartets.¹⁶ It is perhaps ironic that these demands for silence call attention to boundaries between players and audience, reminding listeners that they are “outsiders” to the primary conversation of the players. Perhaps it is this distance that the metaphor of conversation tries to erase, at the same time that it extends to the audience the responsibility of listening carefully. For, if audiences in public venues needed models for attentive listening, they could scarcely do better than to emulate the respectful and fully engaged listening of the quartet members themselves. But only by drawing the listener into active engagement with the discourse can Haydn command ongoing attention to the conversation of the players.

How, then, can we make explicit the role of listening in our analysis of Haydn’s quartets? First, perhaps, by abandoning the notion that “aesthetic distance” is at stake here. This cherished nineteenth-century ideal has as little to do with conversation, in my view, as with Haydn’s quartets, though it may explain the emergence of the listener-as-eavesdropper. Instead, I propose that we start with the humble fermata. The freely extended pause, whether sounding or silent, can serve as one example of a particularly focussed moment of listening. Like the emphatic gestures and deliberate pauses in an orator’s heightened delivery—what

¹⁵ Mary Hunter, *Haydn’s London Trios and his Salomon String Quartets: Private vs. Public?*, in: Elaine Sisman (ed.), *Haydn and his World*, Princeton N. J., 1997, p. 108.

¹⁶ László Somfai, *Haydn’s London String Quartets*, in: *Haydn Studies*, ed. by Jens Peter Larsen, Howard Serwer and James Webster, New York, 1981, p. 390.

Cicero called “eloquentia corporis”¹⁷—fermatas invite attention to aspects of gesture, affect, and form in the musical discourse itself.

C. P. E. Bach noted that fermatas “awaken unusual attentiveness,” and that they should last “as long as required by the nature of the composition.”¹⁸ Leopold Mozart deferred to “good taste and sound judgment,” but noted that “the players must observe each other, not only in order to end the pause together, but also to recommence together.”¹⁹ Both authors remind us that extended pauses are sites of heightened concentration for both players and listeners, suspending moments of anticipation and focussing attention on what is coming next. In performance, such moments also occasion a heightening of the body language that signals the players’ intense concentration: eye contact, a marked choreography in sustaining and lifting of bows, perhaps an intake of breath, nodding of the head, or raising of the eyebrows. While these and other such movements certainly occur throughout a performance, at fermatas they signify a special need for coordination among the players; they also communicate to others the focussed attention that ensemble music requires of both players and listeners. Gesture, in other words, is more than a metaphor.

In addition to bringing physical aspects of performance to the fore, Haydn’s extended pauses function as markers that focus listening at important structural junctions—departures, turning points, arrivals—in the musical discourse. Heinrich Christoph Koch noted the affective weight of such pauses:

“Various reasons motivate the composer to suspend the motion [of the measure] in the midst of its flow . . . and to interrupt it for a time. The expression of surprise or astonishment—whereby the movements of the spirit [Geistes] itself seem to come to a brief standstill—or such places where the prevailing feeling seems to have exhausted itself in its own overflow are sufficient to encourage the presence of such fermatas.”²⁰

¹⁷ Cicero, *Orator*, 55. Cited in: Fritz Graf, *Gestures and Conventions: The Gestures of Roman Actors and Orators*, in: *A Cultural History of Gesture*, ed. by Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg, Ithaca, N. Y., 1991, p. 37.

¹⁸ C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, trans. and ed. by William J. Mitchell, New York 1949, p. 143.

¹⁹ Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, trans. by Editha Knocker, 2nd ed., Oxford 1948 (reprint, 1985), pp. 46–7 [l. iii.19].

²⁰ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, Frankfurt 1802; facsimile reprint, Hildesheim 1964, cols. 561–67.

For the listener, extended pauses may occasion kinaesthetic responses to sudden interruptions, but they also create a space for reflection and prediction, as well as for surprise when what follows the pause is itself unexpected—an experience that players themselves might have in a first read-through of a movement.

Haydn's earliest and most consistent use of fermatas spotlight opportunities for *ad libitum* cadenzas in seven of the slow movements in Opp. 9 and 17, where the attention of players and listeners is drawn to conventional closing gestures controlled by the leading voice. Such places are natural outgrowths of a largely homophonic texture in which the discourse itself is dominated by the first violin while the others play a supporting role as sympathetic listeners. The issue of controlling the delivery is more complex in truly equal-voiced textures, as rhetorical gestures become a corporate responsibility and pauses in the ongoing dialogue less predictable in their placement and outcome.

An overview of Haydn's use of fermatas reveals that most function as "set-ups," as anticipatory gestures that are themselves preceded by extended plateaus of dominant preparation involving the emphasis of extended repetition. And most often they are accompanied by textural and dynamic contrasts that further reinforce attention to the formal juncture at hand, such as the arrival of second-key themes in expositions, or, more often, of tonic and thematic returns in sonata-form recapitulations and rondo refrains. But fermatas may also be surprising halts that signal an apparent "breakdown" and uncertainty of continuation—interruptions and abrupt shifts of direction that suggest confusion and a seeming inability to go on. Startling upsets with unanticipated consequences occur most often in fast finale movements, where extended silences are often measured ones. The grand pauses in the "Joke" finale of Haydn's Opus 33 no. 2 offer the most egregious example of such manipulations of silence. The choreography of closure in this movement alone deserves study, as a visual and physical corollary of catching oneself in the act of listening—and waiting for the sequel.²¹ I have written at some length about this movement and won't revisit it here²². Instead,

²¹ Gerhard J. Winkler discusses this close as "pantomimic"; cf. his article: Op. 33/2: Zur Anatomie eines Schlußeffekts, in: *Haydn-Studien*, vol. VI/4 (1994), pp. 288–97.

²² On the "Joke" Quartet finale, see Wheelock, *Ingenious Jesting*, pp. 10–13; and "Engaging Strategies", pp. 4–10.

I want to turn to the slow movement of a late quartet in which the combination of fermatas and arresting gestures produces a very different kind of conversation.

Not only do fermatas make more frequent appearances in the late quartets, but they show up in a greater number of slow movements, highlighting their most striking moments: startling harmonic and modal shifts, sharp contrasts in register and texture, and hushed passages that in themselves command the listener's attention to a marked change of affect. Salient examples in this regard include the *Largo cantabile e mesto* movement of the D major Quartet, Op. 76 no. 5; the *Fantasia Adagio* of the E flat major Quartet, Op. 76 no. 6; and the *Adagio alla breve* of the G major Quartet, Op. 77 no. 1. In the *Adagio* of Op. 76 no. 4, however, fermatas are absorbed into the theme itself, alerting the listener not only to its uncertain beginning but also to the implications of that uncertainty.

With your indulgence, I'm going to mix metaphors freely in a reading of this *Adagio* as a self-absorbed, even obsessive conversation, one in which proposed resolutions are repeatedly destabilized by rhetorical pauses that highlight conflict and undermine ease of continuation. Not all such pauses involve fermatas. But, as we will see, the spaces occupied by fermatas in the opening subject become sites of unsettling and emphatic gestures as the movement unfolds—chromatic shifts, dynamic accents, registral leaps, and striking figural embellishment that force the conversation (and the listener) to return again and again to reconsider the implications of its ambiguous beginning.

At the outset of this sober discussion, the participants take up a remnant of the previous movement's "Sunrise" theme for amplification, now in close and warm agreement of shared register and hymn-like texture (see example 1). The prolonged and swelling pause that stalls continuation in measure 2 suggests a confusion of hymn and Sarabande topics, perhaps, prompting another try for clarity. In any case, the second attempt inflects the subject with even greater ambiguity and darker undertones. In a graceful rejoinder to this rather fitful start, the first violin persuades the others, one by one, to seek consensus at the cadence in measure 8. Picking up the thread, the second violin explores the subject at the upper octave, now in a varied and continuous restatement, as the first violin displays its upper register in an expansive descant. Once again the first violin seeks

to direct the others toward a tonic cadence. But the cello, who has perhaps been listening more closely to the viola's chromatic line, rejects the cadential 6/4 resolution proposed by the first violin and turns the group forcefully to the submediant. This deflection provokes a startled response, audible (and visible) in the precipitous drop in register of all voices. The first violin, especially, is shaken by this change of harmonic direction, and shudders on the flattened leading tone more than two octaves below its intended resolution. Recalling a remnant of the opening melody in measure 15, the second violin retrieves the lead in asserting the appropriate leading tone in the proper register of the original melody, while the first shudders again to its lowest possible note at the cadence in measure 16.

Now I won't go on in this manner through the entire movement, but it's worth noting that the submediant continues to absorb the company in the measures that follow, as the first violin takes up a dialogue with the cello. Dissonance and *forzando* off-beat accents in their exchange recall not only earlier conflict between the two but also the rhythmic disturbances of the opening. In taking up the lead again, however, the violin finally draws the cello into acquiescent echoes of soloistic display. Having regained the high ground, the violin is reluctant to accede to the cello's seemingly premature fall to the B flat cadence in measure 29 (see example 2). Anticipating a resolution everyone can agree upon, the second violin and viola support the violin's descent from the high F, now a graceful (ideally, *portamento*) sigh.

Recalling the fitful stops and starts of the conversation, as well as its more prodigious leaps in register, the most dramatic disruption of the movement is reserved for the preparation of the tonic return in measure 52 (see example 3). Here again the violin sweeps far above the others, now with greater urgency, and rises to a very high c, reducing the company to silence and confusion. Although the awkward trill of the first violin and the leading tone of the second do find a downbeat, they find no resolution here. Even the cello's *pizzicato* comment can offer little in the way of support for the return of the opening theme, now transformed in a *stretto* of competing claims and tentative recollections of the original subject.

It should be obvious that this conversation is one of constantly shifting balances and redirections involving a subject that was

precariously ambiguous from the start. In making that ambiguity emphatic, the rhetorical pauses in measures 2 and 4 “awaken unusual attentiveness,” as C. P. E. Bach noted. They also point ahead to other fermatas—for example, those that mark the opening theme’s reappearance and affective transformation in E flat minor at measure 35 (see example 4). And to the fermata in measure 65, which highlights not only the local deceptive cadence, but a conflated recollection of turning points in the conversation: the submediant delay of measure 13, the acquiescence of the violin’s sigh in measures 29–30, and the minor subdominant to which the E flat minor version of the theme turned in measures 37–38 (see example 5). The rhetorical pause here thus signals a drawing together of the threads of subsidiary subjects as well as the voices themselves in preparation for closure. Even so, ambiguity of mode haunts the coda that follows, as does the dialogue of violin and cello, who finally join in affirming the tonic major close in answer to the doubting second violin. The subject that has been the focus of such intense concentration is now free of its earlier wrenching rhythms. Only its opening pitches are heard in the faint murmur of the cello’s penultimate bar, even as the violin finds resolution of its low *ab* in the open-string *g* that resolves modal ambiguity.

I suggested earlier that the subject of this Adagio has a resemblance to that of the preceding movement—the neighbor-tone figure heard throughout the opening Allegro con spirito. But there’s another perhaps more telling gesture in the first movement that one might point to as infecting the conversation of the Adagio (see example 6). The fermata in measure 174 suspends a vigorous closing passage, turning it toward the subdominant recall of the “Sunrise” theme in the coda. At this juncture there is not only an extended pause (on V/IV), but a nearly two-octave plunge in the upper voices from the fortissimo high *f* and *ab* to the piano *g* and *bb*. Coming near the end of the movement, the fermata throws into high relief features that will become thematic in the following Adagio. One can speak, then, of a broader conversation between movements in which the rhetoric of gesture has a signifying role. Indeed, the Minuet and Trio as well as the Finale also revisit the subjects of neighbor tones and leaps to trills.

The features I’ve tried to point out in my eclectic reading of the Op. 76 no. 4 Adagio are those that link physical, performative gestures with discursive ones. I don’t mean to suggest that this

approach is adequate to the vast subtleties of this movement: these certainly invite various readings of the movement's conversational and rhetorical aspects. But perhaps a beginning could be made in attending to the simplest and most obvious aspects of musical experience. In the end, we don't need the conversation metaphor to "explain" the compositional procedures of a Haydn string quartet. What the metaphor can help us to express, though, is the feeling-tone and vividness of music in performance. Above all, it acknowledges the process of musical unfolding as a social activity with reciprocal responsibilities in the community of listeners.

Ex. 1:

Adagio.

Viol. 1^o.
Viol. 2^o.
Alto.
Basso.

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet, specifically the first system of the second movement from Joseph Haydn's Op. 76 no. 4. The score is written for four instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Alto, and Bass. The tempo is marked 'Adagio.' and the time signature is 3/4. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first system consists of four staves. The Violin 1 part begins with a melodic line, while the other instruments provide harmonic support. The second system continues the musical development, featuring more complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics. The third system concludes the excerpt, with a trill (tr) marked above a note in the Violin 1 part.

Joseph Haydn, Op. 76 no. 4, second movement, bars 1–16.
(*Oeuvres d'Haydn en partitions, Quatuors, Tome 2, Paris [1803], Pleyel*)

Ex. 2:

The image displays a musical score for three systems, each consisting of four staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs and eighth-note figures. The first system shows a complex melodic line in the upper voice with many accidentals, while the lower voices provide harmonic support with simpler rhythms. The second system continues the melodic development with a prominent sixteenth-note passage in the upper voice. The third system features a dense texture with many beamed notes and rests, particularly in the upper voice, creating a sense of rhythmic complexity and texture.

*Joseph Haydn, Op. 76 no. 4,
second movement, bars 23-30.*

Ex. 3:

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a string quartet. The first system shows a violin part with a complex, rapid sixteenth-note passage, a viola part with a simple harmonic accompaniment, and a cello/bass part with a simple harmonic accompaniment. The second system continues the violin part with a 'loco' section, marked with 'p' and 'f' dynamics, and includes 'pizz.' and 'arco' markings. The viola and cello/bass parts also feature dynamic markings and articulation. The third system shows the violin part continuing with a similar sixteenth-note passage, while the viola and cello/bass parts provide harmonic support.

Joseph Haydn, Op. 76 no. 4, second movement, bars 47–59.

Ex. 4:

The image displays a musical score for four staves, likely representing a string quartet. The music is in G minor (one flat) and 3/4 time. The first staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet in the final bar. The second staff (treble clef) provides harmonic support with dotted half notes and quarter notes. The third staff (treble clef) has a more active melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff (bass clef) provides a steady bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is enclosed in a rectangular box.

Joseph Haydn, Op. 76 no. 4, second movement, bars 35–39.

Ex. 5:

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top staff (treble clef) features a complex, rapid sixteenth-note passage. The second staff (treble clef) contains a single note followed by a dotted half note. The third staff (alto clef) contains a single note followed by a dotted half note. The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a single note followed by a dotted half note. The dynamic marking *pp* is present in the right margin of each staff.

The second system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff (alto clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

The third system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff (alto clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a sixteenth-note accompaniment.

*Joseph Haydn, Op. 76 no. 4,
second movement, bars 62–74.*

Ex. 6:

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first system shows a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the upper staves and more rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves. Dynamic markings include 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'p' (piano). A circled '2' indicates a second ending. The second system continues the piece with similar textures and dynamics, featuring sustained notes and melodic lines.

Joseph Haydn, Op. 76 no. 4,
first movement, bars 171-80.

Diskussion (Leitung: William Drabkin)

David Young

Thank you very much indeed for your most interesting talk. I just wondered if you saw a difference in Haydn's rhetorical language between the fermata or pause and the silence of a bar or two bars of rest. Because when you were speaking I tried to rack my brains for the quartet numbers of some of the most outrageous examples in Haydn of a shock which follows a silence and I was thinking for example of the second movement of Op. 55 no. 2, the "Razor" Quartet. And I just wondered if you saw these things as different versions of the same rhetorical device or different rhetorical devices.

Gretchen Wheelock

Whether or not these are different rhetorical devices, they do have the effect of calling attention to the ongoing discourse. Their functions may well be different, though. I looked at all fermatas and all measured silences that exceeded a bar in the quartets. In the later quartets you find many more of both. In the finales, especially, they are more surprising because the pace is regular and the tune easily grasped, so you recognize these as interruptions. I gave the example of the "Joke" finale of Op. 33 no. 2 maybe the most outrageous example of extended silence. These enormous gaps grab the listener in a very broad way, suggesting a more public style. But the fermata is used more often as a pointer in the direction of what you might expect to happen next rather than a sudden halt that interrupts the proceedings and then makes an untoward turn, as in the second movement of Op. 55 no. 2. In any case, the effect and function of a given pause needs to be looked at in its individual context.

Friedhelm Krummacher

Ich weiß nicht, ob es ein Missverständnis meinerseits war, wenn ich in Ihrem Referat nicht viel über die strukturelle Bedeutung der Dinge hörte, die Sie aufgezeigt haben.

Gretchen Wheelock

One of the points I wanted to make was how important these pauses are structurally. What strikes me at the opening of the Op. 76 no. 4 Adagio is that we don't have a sense of two-bar phrase structure, we don't have a sense of meter, we don't even know what bar we are in. It's very ambiguous right from the beginning, and this ambiguity has both structural and affective implications for the remainder of the movement. There are plenty of slow movements that have fermatas in them, but not right in the thematic material from the start. So it was a great example for my purposes.

Gerhard Kramer

Meine Frage betrifft die Aufführungspraxis in unserer Zeit. Ein berühmter Dirigent – viele folgen ihm nach – würde z. B. als rhetorische Pause in T. 50 nicht zwei Viertel Pause spielen sondern drei. Er würde also die Generalpause verlängern. Das gibt eine gewisse Spannung, das gebe ich zu. Oder in Exempel fünf würde er zum Beispiel die Achtelpausen verlängern usw. Frage: Gibt es in den historischen Quellen Belege für diese Praxis, dass man Generalpausen verlängert?

Gretchen Wheelock

Absolutely no.

Gerhard Kramer

Absolutely no? Ich bin sehr froh, das zu hören.

Gretchen Wheelock

There are varying accounts of measuring fermatas: advice on how many counts to add, etc. But I would be very unhappy with a performance practice that demanded precise measurement of these pauses, because I think they should be as spontaneous as the moment requires. If your performers have taken "extra" time, I like the fact that they took their own time.

David Young

There seems to be—particularly amongst students—a great embarrassment with fermata. And they try to get away from there as soon as possible because there is nothing more terrifying than to stay and not moving on.

William Drabkin

Matters of this sort might come up again tomorrow and we have the hour at the end of the afternoon to discuss things further. I think we'd like to thank our speakers once again. I thank you also for your engagement as participants in this afternoon's session.