

## Orchestration lessons: 1

Joseph Haydn (1755-1809), part 1

Why Haydn? Well, he is really the first composer to be a proper 'orchestrator'. It is no coincidence that his time of life coincides with the establishment of the orchestra as we know it today. Before him, the allocation of material to instruments was done based mostly on what was available. The bass continuo part, for example, was always played by some kind of keyboard instrument, but other than that it was often a matter of chance what else joined in – cello, bass viol, bassoon, theorbo, lute, contrabass, baryton and anything else capable of reading the notes would be used. Similarly, a duo sonata or concerto with two parts in the treble clef could be played by violins, oboes, flutes (recorders), transverse flutes, viols, harpsichords, mandolins or others. The point is, composers did not often write music which was specifically made to be played on one particular instrument, unless they were absolutely sure of which ones they could get. Bach's cantatas and other sacred works do contain *obbligato* solos for trumpet, oboes, horn and others, but these are more the exception than the rule. Also, it hardly needs to be said that Haydn was a brilliant composer!

With Haydn, instruments begin to get definite and individual roles. The strings are like the S-A-T-B in a choir, providing harmony; brass, winds and timpani are used for volume and rhythm. So, for an example, using the trumpets only in loud parts and not as solo instruments starts to happen. However, this does not mean that some of the instruments have a boring time because they play less. Haydn often wrote interesting solos for instruments that did not usually expect them!

You may wonder why I am saying that it is important to orchestrate in the style of composer from 300 years ago. The reason is; although Haydn's music is very different from what came after him and music today, actually the thoughts behind what he does are those behind orchestration in every period. The way in which a composer can use the different instruments to make the music loud or soft, have different layers and make different sounds have been used ever since. So you can apply the idea of what Haydn does to his music to other music in a completely different style.

I hope that you have heard some Haydn before and are somewhat familiar with what his orchestral music sounds like. However I won't deny you the excuse to hear some of his fantastic music now, so please take a quick listen to some of the following. Try and see what instruments are playing and doing what at different times in the music:

'Clock' Symphony No.101: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBuJ9VZkOjc&feature=related> (this is a performance with 'old' instruments conducted by Roger Norrington, trying to sound like it would when Haydn wrote it). The score is [here](#).

Overture to 'The Creation': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wcm5as5RdwQ&feature=related>. This almost sounds like it was written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the amazing dissonances and crazy chords he uses, but it's a masterpiece. Score [here](#).

Now let's take a look at the instruments in Haydn's orchestra. It got bigger as his life went on. At the start when he worked at Eszterházy, he usually wrote for these numbers:

6x violin 1  
6x violin 2  
4x viola  
1x violoncello (yes, this is true!)  
1x contrabass  
2x oboes  
1x bassoon  
2x horns

That's not very big! But by the end of his life when he wrote the 'London' symphonies (93-104), he has this:

10x (or more) violin 1  
10x violin 2  
8x violas  
6x cellos  
4x contrabasses  
2x flutes  
2x oboes  
2x clarinets (a new invention)  
2x bassoons  
2x horns  
2x trumpets  
timpani (2 drums)  
harpsichord continuo (this was still sometimes used)

When orchestrating in the style of Haydn, there are a couple of very general things to remember:

1. Strings play nearly all the time. They can play loud or soft and the violins mostly carry the melody. The cellos and basses almost always play the same thing an octave apart, but the basses sometimes don't play in quiet parts.
2. Brass (horns and if you have them, trumpets) and timpani are 'loud' instruments. So only use them where you need a lot of volume in loud parts of the music. Timpani are used to emphasise rhythms and strong beats.
3. Winds can do both. You have them all in during loud passages, but you can use some of them during quiet parts too.
4. Haydn often ignored these 'rules' because he could see how to create interesting effects by doing so. So don't be confused by what he might do!

There are a few other things to remember: Brasses are 'natural' instruments so they can only play the pitches of the overtone series. This is done by inserting a crook to put the instrument in the key of the piece. You should write for horns and trumpets in the key of the piece (so if it is in D major ask

for 'horns in D'), and then look up what pitches they can play with that (ie 'D') crook in. There will only be about 10 notes they can play, so you will have to work out how to write chords for them. If there is time during a rest, you can ask the players to change the crook and use a different one – but make sure you look up what pitches they can play with this one in! Timpani also are tuned to the same two notes (one being the key of the piece) and this does not often change in the middle of a movement because it had to be done by hand. If you need the timpani to play a note it is not tuned to, just write the pitch it is tuned to already because the effect of hitting the drum will be enough.

The horns and winds will often play a long 'pedal' note if the chord of the piece is the same for a number of bars. They can hold it quite a long time as long as it is not too loud.

Your assignment: below is the link to a string quartet by Haydn. I want you to orchestrate the **minuet and trio** movement (starting on page 7) for the small orchestra he would have had at the **start** of his career listed above (but you can have more than one cello in the section!) **plus** 2 timpani. You should have a look at Haydn scores and try to write in the way he might have done in his own music. You may preserve the string parts as he wrote them in the quartet, but also think about how to use the other instruments in a way that does not make it sound as if they are just added on.

Minuet from Quartet in C, Op.3 No.2: [http://erato.uvt.nl/files/imglnks/usimg/0/02/IMSLP106798-PMLP57559-Haydn - SQ Op.3No.2 FS.pdf](http://erato.uvt.nl/files/imglnks/usimg/0/02/IMSLP106798-PMLP57559-Haydn_-_SQ_Op.3No.2_FS.pdf)

This is a useful page about writing for natural horns, the type Haydn would have written for: [http://www.compositiontoday.com/articles/natural\\_horn.asp](http://www.compositiontoday.com/articles/natural_horn.asp)

Good luck. Don't be worried about making mistakes – just copy Haydn!