

THE MUSIC COLLECTION'S ACQUISITION IN THE HAYDN JUBILEE YEAR



The approaching 200th anniversary of Joseph Haydn's (1732–1809) death has been giving an impetus to cherishing the Haydn cult inside and outside Hungary and to the emergence at music auctions of Haydn sources long believed to have been lost.

As the most significant Haydn collection in the world, the Hungarian national library has rarely been able to apply the privileged state of being the first in its acquisition policy. Nevertheless, in April 2008 a decisive shift took place. Much before the catalogue had arrived, our fellow music historians had informed us that in April the Stargardt auction house would put on auction as item 710 a Haydn source preserved by the Esterházy family in Budapest. It was the "HV", or the legendary Haydn-Verzeichnis, a stable reference point of the Haydn literature.

According to those who have a long memory, after the siege of Buda this important document was never recovered again from the Esterházy casemates in Tárnok utca, thus could not constitute an integral part of NSZL's Haydn collection. The manuscript compiled in 1804–1805 is without any doubt from the composer's bequest, as it was confirmed by news from Berlin preceding the auction. It was also established that it had gone into the ownership of the Prince Eszterházy family as part of Haydn's bequest. Its return to Budapest – this time to the Haydn collection of NSZL – was whole-heartedly supported by scholars inside and outside Hungary. Informed of the auction, the leadership of NSZL and the Hungarian cultural government did not hesitate to take the decision to assist and subsidize in every possible way the purchase of the manuscript taken abroad under circumstances impossible to identify.

Bidding took place by telephone in the workroom of the Acquisition Department on 1st April: Thanks to the excellent work of Borbála Korompay-Tóth, the manuscript found its way back into the Music Collection. This manuscript, which has become accessible to researchers in its entirety, is the ageing Haydn's important stocktaking of life. (Danish musicologist Jens Peter Larsen reviewed it in 1939, and

published a facsimile reprint of a part of it in 1979.) In this huge undertaking, the composer, who intended to have all his works catalogued, relied on help from Johann Elssler (1769–1843), his student and copyist. Based on manuscripts, published music and earlier Haydn catalogues, he edited and compiled in two columns organized by genres the list of compositions, supplementing them with music incipits. The title of the manuscript, which was compiled with Haydn's ongoing supervision and contains occasional corrections in the composer's own hand, is called: "Verzeichnis aller derjenigen Compositionen, deren ich mich beyläufig erinnere von meinem 18ten bis in das 73ste Jahr verfertigt zu haben." (A list of all compositions that, drawing on my vague memories, I produced between eighteen and seventy-three.)

The compilation includes several hundred Haydn pieces (items destroyed in fires at Kismarton and Eszterháza), with several about the existence of which this is the only source in the Haydn literature. The project aiming at totality has certain shortcomings. Leaving out and forgetting about occasional compositions dating back to earlier than 1765 may be a sign of the 73-year old Haydn's failing memory. Nevertheless, despite the missing items, the manuscript has so far unpublished chapters that have received little scholarly attention: the *Schottische Lieder* on pages 68-132, listing the adaptations of Scottish, Welsh and Irish folk songs Haydn composed between 1791 and 1805.

By obtaining "HV" or the popularly known "Das Elßlersche Haydn-Verzeichnis", that placed the emphasis on Elssler's role, the Esterházy Collection of NSZL has acquired the main source testifying the authenticity of Haydn's works as a lasting overture to the Haydn Jubilee Year. We owe our deep gratitude to all those who have assisted us in purchasing the manuscript.

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