Beautiful Haydn
by Nancy November

Abstract

Several late eighteenth-century aesthetic ideas, notably the sublime and conceptions of humor, have been extensively discussed with respect to Haydn, but beauty has garnered only passing mention. Yet the beautiful was a key aesthetic category in Haydn’s day, theorized by leading philosophers of the late eighteenth century such as Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke. Moreover, Haydn himself considered beauty as fundamental to good composition, and as a goal of the best performance. This essay first considers the idea of beauty in Haydn’s day: How was it defined with regard to music? And how do theories about the beautiful relate to Haydn? It then argues that Haydn could invoke “beauty” as a musical topic or topos (as in “A Pastoral Song,” Hob. X VIIa:27), and even crafted a work that is in some important sense “about” the beautiful (“O Tuneful Voice,” Hob. XVIa:42). In these songs, as well as in larger scale works such as the symphonies and oratorios, especially The Creation, Hob.XXI:2, musical beauty, and its capacity to beget sympathy (or not) becomes an important part of Haydn’s musical argument.

I. Introduction

Writing the entry on “beautiful” for the forthcoming Cambridge Haydn Encyclopedia, I was struck by the absence of scholarship on this topic in connection with Haydn.¹ Other late eighteenth-century aesthetic ideas have been extensively discussed with respect to him, notably the sublime and conceptions of humor.² But


beauty has garnered only passing mention. James Webster’s article “Haydn’s Aesthetics,” for example, contains mention of the words “beautiful” or “beauty” only twice, in two source quotations: (i) In 1779, Haydn wrote to the Tonkünstler-Sozietät that “The fine arts and the so beautiful science of composition tolerate no artisan’s fetters: the spirit and the soul must be free, if one wishes to be of service to the widows and attain one’s just deserts.”3 Webster discusses this quotation in connection with originality, as does Elaine Sisman.4 (ii) In 1796, Haydn is reported to have made the following comment in connection with the performance of his Missa in tempore belli, Hob. XXII:9, which Webster discusses with regard to Delikatesse (subtlety or refinement):

[Haydn] sang the beginnings of most of the movements, so that the canon could hear both the various tempos and, here and there, the correct expression. [The canon] should instruct the performers, both individually and as a group; in particular, they should refrain from any sort of ornamentation, which could have no effect other than to disfigure such a subtle composition: for it already includes all possible expression in itself anyway, just as it is; and the greatest beauty is dependent solely on the correct tempo, [bringing out] the proper light and shade, and precise execution.5

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5 “[Haydn] sang ... die meisten Anfänge, damit der Herr Kanonikus ... sowohl die verschiedenen Tempos als auch hie und da den wahren Ausdruck hören und dem Orchesterdirektor sagen könne, wie Haydn es haben will; der Dirigent solle die ausübenden Musiker, sowohl einzeln als auch zusammen, unterrichten und hauptsächlich von aller Art Verzierungen abhalten, welche zu weiter nichts als zur Veranstaltung so einer äußerst delikaten Komposition beitragen, da diese ohnehin schon allen möglichen Ausdruck, so wie es steht, in sich enthält und die größte Schönheit ... nur vom
Striking in both of these quotations is Haydn’s emphasis on beauty—both as fundamental to (good) composition, and as a goal of the best performance.

Why the lack of literature on the subject of the beautiful, in connection with Haydn? These two quotations, alone, suggest that the topic was central to his aesthetics. In Haydn’s day, the beautiful was a key aesthetic category, theorized by leading philosophers of the late eighteenth century such as Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke. Aestheticians of Haydn’s time divided the field using the sublime and beautiful as key categories. To these, a third category, the ornamental (niedlich) or picturesque, was often added. These aesthetic ideas were clearly ranked in terms of status, and beauty was considered secondary to the sublime. But it was typically discussed alongside the sublime as a counterpart and something of an opposing category, although writers did not imply that the absence of one (beauty or sublime) defined the presence of the other. Burke’s comparison in his treatise A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757) was typical, and widely imitated:

On closing this general view of beauty, it naturally occurs, that we should compare it with the sublime; and in this comparison there appears a remarkable contrast. For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth, and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates, it often makes a strong deviation; beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy; beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive.⁶

One has a hint here of why recent scholars might be more drawn to discuss the sublime than the beautiful in connection with Haydn. In his day, aesthetic ideas were ranked in terms of status: sublime as highest, ornamental as low. Burke and his followers tended to consider Beautiful objects as “lesser” in terms of physical dimensions and effects on the beholder. Beauty would not move the beholder/listener so profoundly as the sublime, which showed qualities of vastness, strength, and originality (“strong deviation”). London critics of Haydn’s day used adjectives associated with the sublime to praise his works in the same terms as Handel’s revered compositions, and thus to compare his music favorably to great “ancient” works of the past. The adjectives they used in discussing the effects of his music, linking it to the Burkean idea of the sublime, included “striking,” “infinite,” “astonishing,” and “powerful.”

In applying the idea of the sublime to Haydn’s The Creation, contemporaries such as Christoph Martin Wieland went so far as to imply that the work actually effects a fusion of the persona in the work and the author of the work, thus referring back to the ancient definitions of the sublime by pseudo-Longinus. Modern Haydn scholars’ tendency to focus on this more prestigious aesthetic idea is perhaps, in part, an attempt to bring Haydn up to the same plane as Mozart and Beethoven in today’s understanding—as a composer whose works can now, and did then, powerfully move the listener.

Beauty is perhaps also considered by some Haydn scholars and critics (then as now) to be so fundamental to his music that it goes without saying, or as too large and ill-defined a category to discuss usefully. It may well also be that beauty in Haydn’s music has not been much considered owing to the neglect—since the early nineteenth century and until recently—of the repertoire in which it is most apparent: his vocal music, especially his songs; although I will argue that it is by no means only clearly apparent in that repertoire. Beauty is discussed briefly in an essay by A. Peter Brown on the mixing of aesthetic categories in Haydn’s “London” symphonies, and in three recent essays on Haydn’s songs, both of which topics are considered further below.

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First, though, I consider the idea of beauty in Haydn’s day: How was it defined with regard to music? And how do theories about the beautiful relate to Haydn?

II. Beauty and music in late eighteenth-century thought

As noted, in his treatise Burke located the beautiful in objects that are well formed and aesthetically pleasing; he enumerated smallness, smoothness, and delicacy as qualities that give rise to beauty. He emphasized the feminine in his examples, as did William Hogarth, who located the exemplary “line of beauty” in the form of a corseted female torso (see The Analysis of Beauty, 1753; Figure 1). He associated beauty with what he termed “passions of society,” dividing these into two kinds: (i) the society of the sexes, leading to propagation; (ii) more general interactions between people, people and animals, and even the inanimate world. He further divided the passions of society depending on the ends they serve, namely sympathy, imitation and ambition. Of these, sympathy is the most relevant in this essay: Burke defined it as the process by which we “enter into the concerns of others; that we are moved as they are moved.” This process takes place not just through interpersonal communication, but is also the means by which “poetry, painting, and other affecting arts” move us. Passions circulate extra-personally, but operate corporeally “transfusing,” ultimately, from “one breast to another.”

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9 Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, 60-61.

10 Ibid., 70-71.
For Burke the beautiful may be formed in music, whereas he implies that the sublime in sounds is chiefly a product of natural noise, citing “vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery.” Discussing the beautiful in connection with sounds, Burke is at first rather vague as to what, exactly, qualifies as beautiful (sounds that are “clear, even, smooth, and weak”), but reasonably specific as to its effects (“a species of melancholy”):

[T]he beautiful in music will not bear that loudness and strength of sounds, which may be used to raise other passions; nor notes, which are shrill or harsh, or deep; it agrees best with such as are clear, even, smooth, and weak. ... great variety, and quick transition from one measure to another, are contrary to the genius of the beautiful in music. Such transitions often excite

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Ibid., 151.
mirth, or other sudden and tumultuous passions; but not that sinking, that melting, that languor, which is the characteristical effect of the beautiful as it regards every sense. The passion excited by beauty is in fact nearer to a species of melancholy than to jollity and mirth.12

Burke was slightly more specific where he suggested that *vocal* melody is a key source of “the beautiful in sounds,” citing Milton’s *L’Allegro*: “With wanton heed, and giddy cunning/The *melting* voice through *mazes* running/*Untwisting* all the chains that tye/The hidden soul of harmony.”13 Song’s capacity to work on our feelings—experienced corporeally as “melting” and “untwisting”—made it a potentially powerful means by which to achieve sympathy.

Writing slightly later than Burke, in his *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (1771-4), Johann Georg Sulzer, went further in implying that beauty can be epitomized by song. The idea of beauty, Sulzer believed, arises from a moral resonance in the soul—the arousal of the emotions consonant with virtue—rather than a rational judgment of the mind or stimulation of the senses. Of all the arts, he privileged music for its capacity to act viscerally on our soul, thus having great potential to effect this kind of resonance.14 Of all music, song had the greatest ability to stimulate these resonances, being, or approximating closely, a series of impassioned tones. Song, he found, is the primary aim of music; thus, he wrote, “all harmonic elaboration ultimately simply serves the goal of beautiful song.”15

In his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), Kant loosened the conception of the beautiful from a particular object, relocating it firmly within the subject or self. Whereas the sublime gives rise to a sense of awe and a temporary blockage of cognition, an object is beautiful when its form fits our

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12 Ibid., 234-5.

13 John Milton, *L’Allegro*, lines 135-136 and 139-144; quoted in ibid., 111-112. [Burke’s italics].


cognitive powers and enables such a “free play” between the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding, which is pleasurable. The judgment that something is beautiful means that it has the “form of finality”: the beautiful object seems to have been designed with a purpose, but does not have any apparent practical function or use. According to Kant, visible objects present intuitions to the mind, whereas auditory impulses give rise to sensations but no actual intuitions, which are needed for the form of beauty. Thus, in Kant’s estimation, musical beauty remains a “mere play of sensations (in time)” (bloßes Spiel der Empfindungen [in der Zeit]), which gives rise mainly to enjoyment rather than culture. He ranked music lowest among the fine arts.\textsuperscript{16}

Christian Friedrich Michaelis, a follower of Kant writing in 1806–7, related the beautiful much more concretely to music than had Kant, Sulzer or Burke. He arrived in Jena in 1792, shortly after the publication of Kant’s \textit{Critique of Judgment} (1790) and attended Friedrich Schiller’s aesthetics lectures, which were strongly influenced by Kantian thinking. Michaelis partly built on Kant’s ideas about music aesthetics, but did not accept his low opinion of music. In an important essay of 1806, “An attempt to educe the inner essence of music” (“Ein Versuch, das innere Wesen der Tonkunst zu entwickeln”) for the \textit{Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung}, Michaelis noted that although auditory impulses allow us to hear music, they are not music itself, which comes from the faculty of the imagination. According to Michaelis, visual arts present formal unity at once to the mind; and literary arts tie this to concepts of the understanding. But music, due to its transient nature, allows us to perceive formal unity as it unfolds in time; it is thus better able to approximate those aesthetic ideas that originate in reason than the other fine arts.

As was typical, Michaelis defined beauty in contrast to the sublime: “the beautiful relates to form, \textit{outline, limitation}, the easily apprehended \textit{image} of the object in space, or the easily apprehended melody, the gentle harmonic and rhythmic play of emotions in time.”\textsuperscript{17} The sublime, on the other hand, gives rise to feelings of awe and

\textsuperscript{16} Immanuel Kant, \textit{Kritik der Urteilschaft} (Berlin and Libau: Lagarde and Friedrich, 1790), I/i, §14.

\textsuperscript{17} “Das Schöne betrifft die Form, den Umriß, die Begränzung, das leicht faßliche Melodie, das sanfte harmonisch-rhythmische Spiel der Empfindungen in der Zeit”, Christian Friedrich Michaelis, “Einige Bemerkungen über das Erhabene der Musik,” \textit{Berlinische musikalische Zeitung} 1/46 (1805), 179.
astonishment, which is achieved by the use of unconventional, surprising, powerfully startling, or striking harmonic progressions or rhythmic patterns. Taking up Kant’s notion that beautiful objects are not tied to a particular purpose, and Burke’s idea of the enchanting beauty of voice, he noted:

[M]usic's aesthetic quality, as in everything where beauty captivates us, does not ... have anything to do with what is stated or expressed, but with the order and manner in which ideas are presented. Just as a lover rejoices to hear his beloved speak, bewitched by the sound of her voice and oblivious to what she is saying, so music often enchants us simply by its very existence, by the union of melody and harmony in a manifold interplay of the most intimate kind which reverberates in our innermost being, whatever the content may be.18

In two early nineteenth century publications by William Crotch, the sublime and beautiful are discussed yet further in terms of their musical manifestations: the *Specimens of Various Styles of Music referred to in A Course of Lectures read at Oxford and London*, dating from c. 1808 to 1815; and his later publication of the lectures themselves, *The Substance of Several Courses of Lectures in Music* (1831). Crotch built on the Burkean idea of beauty in the *Specimens*, and developed his discussion of beauty with respect to music further in *The Substance*:

Beauty, in all the arts, is the result of softness, smoothness, delicacy, smallness, gentle undulations, symmetry, and the like. When, therefore, in music the melody is vocal and flowing, the measure symmetrical, the harmony simple and intelligible, and the style of the whole soft, delicate, and

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sweet, it may with as much propriety be called beautiful, as a small, perfect Grecian temple, or a landscape of Claude Lorraine.  

Wye Allanbrook asks a key question in connection with the sublime: can it be considered a musical topos? The above-cited writings—especially that of Michaelis—help to answer a parallel question: can the beautiful be considered as a musical topos? Kant would have answered “no.” Indeed, as mentioned, Kant did not specifically theorize the beautiful with regard to music. Even had he done so, his understanding of music as an ephemeral “play of sensations” means that he would not have argued in terms of concrete “musical signs” within a composition—musical themes, ideas and gestures—that direct listeners to the idea of the beautiful. Michaelis, on the other hand, did allow that a composer could depict aspects of sublime objects in music, and that, alternatively, they could portray our states of mind when we are aroused by the sublime. And, as we have seen, he did allow that music could actually “be” beautiful, that is, it could create beauty and not only mimic it. One sees from Crotch’s writings, too, that the beautiful could be invoked as a kind of musical topic, a texture embodied by gentle, flowing “vocal” melody with simple harmonies and regular harmonic rhythm. Key qualities of beautiful music, according to these writers, are that it is readily apprehensible and gently engages the listener. For writers such as Burke and his followers, this engagement may result in a sympathetic transferal of passions, and “a species of melancholy.”

I will argue that, in Haydn’s case, he did invoke “beauty” in the sense of a topic (as in “A Pastoral Song,” Hob. XVIIa:27), and would even craft a work that is in some important sense “about” the beautiful (“O Tuneful Voice,” Hob. XVIa:42). In these songs, as well as in larger scale works such as the symphonies and oratorios, especially The Creation (Hob.XXI:2), musical beauty, and its capacity to beget sympathy (or not) becomes an important part of Haydn’s musical argument.

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20 Allanbrook, “Is the Sublime a Musical Topos?”

III. Haydn and the beautiful

Crotch typifies the turn in Haydn reception in the nineteenth century: he was scathing of Haydn’s ability to move the listener in manifold ways. He considered very little of Haydn’s music (only instrumental music), and in little depth (keyboard reductions, and only one entire work), finding a predominance of the “lowest” style, the ornamental.22 Taking up the metaphor for musical beauty used by Crotch, Stendhal named Haydn the Claude Lorraine of music, but he applied this metaphor in the context of denigrating Haydn’s abilities to compose vocal music or to invoke melancholy sensibility; his invocation of Claude Lorraine placed the emphasis on Lorraine’s work as a landscape painter, and was used to set up a comparison with Raphael, who with his detailed focus on people, was “wholly sentimental.” Haydn, the “landscape painter” is thus represented as a mainly abstract, objective and broad-brush (symphonic) composer.23 This volume contains notes by Stendahl’s English editor, William Gardiner, which throw light on the slightly more favorable British reception of Haydn’s music. It is in this context (discussing Haydn as “Claude Lorraine”) that Gardiner saw fit to interject, with a lengthy footnote: “The canzonets, which Haydn wrote during his residence in this country, are but little known on the continent, and must surely have been absent from the author’s recollection when he wrote the above remarks....”24

What of Haydn’s own views on the beautiful? As noted, the sublime has been much discussed in relation to him. Yet the aesthetics of the beautiful, especially as they

22 In the three volumes of Specimens one finds only the second movement of Symphony No. 82; the first and second movements of String Quartet Op. 76 no. 3; and all of Symphony No. 74. On nineteenth-century Haydn reception, see especially Leon Botstein, “The Consequences of Presumed Innocence: The Nineteenth-Century Reception of Joseph Haydn,” in Haydn Studies, 1-34; on Haydn and the ornamental or “picturesque,” and his London audiences, see Annette Richards, The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 143-44.


24 The footnote begins on page 150 of Stendhal’s Vies de Haydn.
were linked to melody and song, were arguably more fundamental to his work. Evidence of his aesthetic preconceptions is to be found in his “London Notebooks,” the contents of his library, and interviews with early biographer Georg August Griesinger, as well as the music itself.25 At the root of Haydn’s reflections about what constituted good music—and thus beauty in music—was the idea of good (melodic) invention, and the ability to develop a theme in a logical and flowing manner. According to Griesinger, Haydn insisted that “fluent song” (fließender Gesang) was a prerequisite for good music, and he lamented contemporary composers’ lack of vocal training: “[Haydn] also criticized the fact that now so many musicians compose who have never learned how to sing. ‘Singing must almost be reckoned one of the lost arts; instead of song, people allow the instruments to dominate.’”26 The integrity of the “fluent song” itself was to be maintained and coherently worked out so that the resulting work would “remain in the heart” of the listener.27 Indeed the aesthetics of song can be considered to govern his musical output, vocal and instrumental works alike. Vocal music and vocally-based aesthetics were a matter of personal and professional identity and pride to Haydn throughout his career.

Haydn owned a copy of Burke’s Philosophical Enquiry, might have read it in detail, and was anyway probably familiar with its contents from conversations with contemporaries. Certainly several of his works seemed to represent the categories used by Burke and others well. Yet one needs to remember that the dyad (or triad) of the sublime and beautiful (and picturesque) were categories of reception that stabilized towards the end of Haydn’s career. He was working within a much more fluid and less stable field of aesthetics than were writers such as Burke, Crotch, Kant, and Michaelis, and seems to have taken a broad view of the subject. Critics and admirers alike noted his use and mixing of the sublime, beautiful, and ornamental in

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27 Griesinger, Biographische Notizen,114.
his instrumental music.\textsuperscript{28} This notion of “mixing” provides a hint as to how one might discuss the beautiful in connection with his works. A broader hint is provided by Haydn’s champion Johann Karl Friedrich Triest, who went so far as to observe that beautiful song is to be found throughout Haydn’s oeuvre, in instrumental and vocal music alike, as an underlying basis for “good composition:”

\textquote[Haydn]{[Haydn] studied the great Italian masters, and so who would be surprised that he gave us such splendid melodies, that everything in his works, even the most complex passages, sings so beautifully; that his principal movements, whether in the serious or in the comic style, have such a meaningful, powerful simplicity, by which the feelings of connoisseur and amateur alike are immediately swept along.\textsuperscript{29}}

This idea of beautiful song as fundamental to composition is also implied in Haydn’s own 1779 comments to the Tonkünstler-Sozietät, quoted above.

One can go further, pointing to a number of more concrete references to the beautiful in Haydn’s works, in which beauty seems to function as a kind of musical \textit{topos}. Some of the most explicit and expressive examples of the beautiful in Haydn’s music can be found in his English songs. In his lengthy “corrective” footnote to Stendhal’s \textit{Life of Haydn}, cited above, Gardiner noted “a perfect example of the line of Beauty” in Haydn’s “A Pastoral Song,” thus drawing on Hogarth’s ideal (see Figure 1). He went on to detail qualities of the beautiful in this work: “The intervals through which the melody passes,” he wrote, “are so minute, so soft, and delicate, that all the ideas of grace and loveliness are awakened in the mind” (see Example 1, bars 9-12). A reporter for the \textit{Musical Magazine and Review} (1822) adopted Burke’s language when he observed: “If we trace this beautiful air, we find it relaxing into pensiveness

\textsuperscript{28} Brown, “The Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ornamental.”

as it proceeds, and at the words “Alas! I scarce can go or creep,” it droops into a pleasing languor” (see Example 1, bars 27-9). Significantly, this is precisely one of the points where “beautiful song” breaks down. The singer must execute written out “sighs.” Even if subtly performed (as Haydn would doubtless have had it—see the above quotation on the Missa in tempore belli), the act of sighing can draw the listener’s attention to the act of singing. Thus the topos of “beautiful song” (and the popular figure of “beauty in distress”) becomes apparent in this passage. Burke’s notion that musical beauty is “nearer to a species of melancholy” than to mirth seems apt here:


In Haydn’s “O Tuneful Voice,” Haydn invokes the experience of a beautiful voice with great detail and subtlety. In its two verses, the poem by Anne Hunter’s that Haydn set invokes various modes by which the protagonist experiences the voice of the beloved—feeling and hearing in verse one; seeing or watching in verse two:

O Tuneful voice, I still deplore
Those accents which, tho’ heard no more,
Still vibrate on my heart;
In echo’s cave I long to dwell,
And still would hear the sad farewell,
When we were doom’d to part.

Bright eyes, O that the task were mine,
To guard the liquid fires that shine,
And round your orbits play;
To watch them with a vestal’s care,
And feed with smiles a light so fair,
That it may ne’er decay.\(^{31}\)

Haydn’s setting of verse two, concerning visual recall, appears at first to offer a decisive turn of events in terms of the protagonist’s experience. Reminiscence of the “bright eyes” brings with it a return of the tonic the opening thematic idea. The voice resolves decisively upwards by step to the tonic (Example 2, bars 47-8, which suggests an extended resolution of the D-flats of the previous section). One might invoke the age-old trope of the eyes being the window on the soul; or, with Burke, one might argue that the eye is one of the most strongly attractive features of the human form, especially when its motions languorously describe a “line of beauty.” “I have hitherto purposely omitted to speak of the Eye,” wrote Burke towards the end of A Philosophical Enquiry, “which has so great a share in the beauty of the animal creation. ... the motion of the eye contributes much to its beauty, by continually shifting its direction; but a slow and languid motion is more beautiful than a brisk one; the latter is enlivening; the former lovely.”\(^{32}\)

Yet, as is typical in these songs, all is not quite so straightforward. Haydn’s “O Tuneful Voice,” unlike Burke’s aesthetic theory, is concerned not so much with objects as with experience (as in Kant’s and Michaelis’s conception). The song is

\(^{31}\) Anne Hunter, Poems (London: T. Payne, 1802), 105. In the Haydn setting, “doom’d” in verse 2 is replaced by “forc’d.”

\(^{32}\) Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, 224.
nonetheless consistent with Burke’s idea that evoking sympathy is one of the main roles of the fine arts. Less L’Allegro, more Il Pensoroso, “O Tuneful Voice” is less about the evocation of beauty than it is about its absence and loss. It concerns a process of seeking, a quest for sympathy and identity, by varied means. The listener, in turn, is invited to take an exploratory approach to the musical experience in this song, to “seek” through the various modes of experience—feeling, listening, and viewing—to become entranced by the sound of a voice with which he or she can strongly identify, as in the case of the bewitched lover in Michealis’s definition of beauty.

Ultimately, the listener is prompted to step back. In the final section of the song, the protagonist seems to protest too much, inviting the listener’s critical reflections on whether true sympathy can ever be achieved. The voice is drawn to e², which might now (following bar 48) be associated with the eyes of the beloved: the protagonist’s gaze into the past now seems to turn into fixation, especially at the fermata in bar 57. The voice becomes increasingly fragmentary. Here the sighs suggest (and induce) a grasping (or gasping) at something that is fading, particularly at the final suspiri (Example 2, bar 77). The drop in register at the structural cadence in bars 65-6, too, suggests the “decay” of the once bewitching vision. The sense of fixity is compounded when, after the structural cadence numerous repetitions of the final line of text still follow. Rising melodic ideas give way to a recall of the falling melodic motif from the introduction (bar 2) at the (obsessively repeated) final line, “that it may ne’er decay.” Here the lengthening note values on “may” and “decay” (see Example 2, bars 73-6) suggests that for the protagonist, the “decay” of the beautiful vision is equally as likely to happen as it is “ne’er” to pass. The dialectic of “may decay” and “ne’er decay” is kept in play until the last: in the keyboard part, the falling gesture is now united with the rising triadic idea from the introduction (bar 1; see bars 73-6). A final melodic arch in the keyboard (bars 79-81) leads to a final lower-register “decay,” which is intoned in a telling pianissimo. This song can be understood to be about musical beauty, and as a melancholy lament to its fleeting nature.

Such subtle invocations of the beautiful are also to be found in Haydn’s instrumental works. Brown suggests that Haydn’s main focus in the slow movements of his
“London” symphonies is on the beautiful and ornamental styles, and that in these works in general, Haydn was responding to the tastes of the contemporary English audiences. The Adagio of Symphony No. 98, it is true, begins with what seems to be a clear invocation of the musically beautiful: a smooth flowing cantabile is created through the stepwise melody and simple, direct harmony; and he finds the Adagio of Symphony No. 102(105)/II in B-flat major to be “the most monolithically beautiful of all the London slow movements.” Yet, as Crotch noted, and as I shall discuss, the three styles are rarely found in an unmixed state in Haydn’s works.

The source for this movement is the Adagio cantabile of Piano Trio Hob. XV:26, dedicated to Rebecca Schroeter, transposed from F-sharp major to F major. Of this transposition, Brown writes: “In the context of Hob.XV:26, the Adagio seems the least melancholy of the cycle, while in Symphony No. 102(105)/ii the same music takes on a darker hue.” This sense of melancholy, or “darker hue,” that he describes arguably arises here, as in “O Tuneful Voice,” from the listener’s sense of distance from that very “monolith” of beauty. New in the orchestral movement is the filigree sixteenth-note triplet accompaniment in the cello, which contributes, at first, to the sense of beautiful flow as the melody unfolds in the violins. But all this proves to be a foil against which a more sublime rather than sweet melancholy can emerge. Starting in bar 9, the movement contains abrupt pauses, sharp shifts in tonality and register, and more angular vocal execution, suggesting declamation rather than song. Trumpets (in C) and drums (in F and C) are added to the return of the opening theme in bar 17, bursting forth in bar 27 and serving to shatter any sense of monolithic melodic beauty. So, too, after another pause, does the sudden dip into flat regions (A-flat major in bar 37 for the return of the opening theme). A dropping into sweet melancholy and a return of “beautiful voice” is suggested by the surprising chromatic move outwards for the final return of the theme, in the tonic (bars 44-5). But this return is not a full resolution; it is tinted with the darker hues of trumpets and drums, and the further unrest unleashed in a final forte declamatory outburst in D-flat can scarcely be quieted by three closing bars, sempre più piano.

33 Brown, “The Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ornamental,” 45 and 59.
34 Ibid., 60.

Bright eyes, that it may ne’er decay,

That it may ne’er decay, that it may ne’er decay.

That it may ne’er decay, that it may ne’er decay.
IV. Conclusion: the Beauty of The Creation

The beautiful was not merely a foil for the sublime, but an aesthetic category in its own right, to which Haydn turned from his earliest works onwards. Consider the frequent invocations of song in his earliest string quartets. Or, near the end of his career, The Creation, which is in many respects considered to be an epitome of the musical sublime.\(^{36}\) Carl Friedrich Zelter, although in some respects concurring with this view, also signaled the fundamental importance of beauty in the work, writing that The Creation “shows us the beauties of Paradise, of a magnificent garden, or of a new-born world.”\(^{37}\) One can find self-sufficient invocations of the musically beautiful throughout, but perhaps most clearly towards the end of the work, for example in the trio No. 18, “Most Beautiful appear,” (“In holder Anmut stehn”) and No. 30 the duet of Adam and Eve with chorus, “By Thee with bliss” (“Von deiner Güt”). Indeed, one can trace a gradual movement from the sublime to the beautiful across the work, with a particular emphasis on the sublime in Part I, and on the beautiful in Part III.\(^{38}\)

The shift takes place gradually, in Part II. Gabriel’s F major aria No. 15, “On mighty Pens uplifted soars” (“Auf starkem Fittich schwinget sich”) is fast and lively, but telling fermatas hint at a more reflective stance, and at the increasingly lengthy invocations of beauty that are to follow. Fermatas occur at the reference to love (“Liebe,” bars 64, 66, 93 and 95), which signifies sociability among animals—the “cooing” of dove pairs. Further fermatas and long melismas, occur at the mention of “(soft) enchanting song” (“reizender Gesang”, bars 147, 149, 153-61, 176-7 and 180-95)—a \textit{locus classicus} of the beautiful and an ideal means by which to incite sympathy according to writers like Burke and Sulzer. These moments of reflection, coupled with brief turns to the minor (for example D minor, piano, the mention of the merry morning lark, bars 54-6) invoke a “mixed,” slightly melancholy passion:

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\(^{37}\) “Es ist demnach hier blos von einer historisch-poetisch Darstellung die Rede, wo Bewegung und Ruhe durch ein zauberhaftes Farbenspiel der Imagination und durch die Kunst der Musik verlebendigt, dem inner Auge, wie ein höheres Schattenspiel, vorbey geführt warden soll, wo uns die Schönheit des Paradieses, eines herrlichen Gartens, oder einer neu gebornen Welt...,” Recension [Die Schöpfung], \textit{Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung} 4/24 (1802), 389.

\(^{38}\) I am grateful to Michael Ruhling for sharing his ideas on this topic with me.
although Gabriel is “not turning to a mournful tale,” the possibility of this seems to linger (bars 170-72; tonizing G minor). These features of the aria are congruent with Burke’s description of love as a “mixed” passion of society, the object of which is beauty, and with his idea that beauty lies close to melancholy.39

Raphael’s accompanied recitative, which follows, No. 16, “And God created great whales” (“Und Gott schuf große Walfische”) is a turning point: God speaks, and now tells the created to create. After this point, beauty comes to the fore with greater clarity, especially in Gabriel’s section of the trio No. 18, “Most beautiful appear.” This A-major cantabile, which opens softly, has piquant dynamic shifts; these add rather than detract from the delicately winding (perhaps “melting” or “untwisting” in Burke’s terms) sixteenth-note motion in second violin and viola, which pervade much of the setting where the subject is natural beauties (suggestive, for example, of the gentle downwards motion of hills and cooling crystal drops in the text). The passage from sublime to beautiful is further charted in Part II in Uriel’s C-major aria, No. 24 “In native worth and honour clad” (“Mit Würd’ und Hoheit angetan”). Cello and wind solos enhance the sense of beautiful line traced by the voice here, and the first violins enter with a legato, pianissimo circling and descending figure just after the most direct reference to the female form (the locus of beauty, for Burke, bars 64-71 and 79-86): “woman fair and graceful spouse/her softly smiling virgin looks.” From this point onwards in the aria, as in the work in general, once hears fewer sudden (and potentially sublime) interruptions; in terms of gesture, continuity of affect, phrasing, texture, and harmonic language and rhythm, the movements become more readily apprehensible, in keeping with contemporary ideas of the musically beautiful.

Part III leaves behind the charting of biblical days through Genesis—itself considered sublime by contemporaries. As in the preceding parts of the work, texts are still drawn from the psalms and Milton’s Paradise Lost, works from which Burke, not coincidentally, also drew in his Philosophical Enquiry. Invocations of the sublime are certainly to be found in the remainder of The Creation, and most powerfully in the final chorus, No. 34 “Sing the Lord ye voices all!” (“Singt dem Herren alle

39 See Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, 66 and 236.
Stimmen!""). However, if one considers the main “plot” items of Part III, rather than commentary on that plot (as in the closing chorus), then one hears how strongly Haydn invokes musical beauty here. The change in emphasis is readily evident from Uriel’s accompanied recitative, No. 29 “In rosy mantle appears” (“Aus Rosenwolken bricht”), which opens Part III, in which an opening trio of solo flutes foreshadow and reinforce delicately balanced melodic shapes of the voice (Example 3). Melodic movement is, from now on, generally smooth and frequently stepwise, and recitative tends towards the lyrical and melismatic. Choral sections are now generally homorhythmic and simple, rather than fugal and complex (No. 34 excepted), as in Adam and Eve’s C-major duet, No. 30, “By thee with bliss.” In that duet, wind, brass and tympani are used in service of achieving delicacy and balance of phrasing, rather than creating sudden shock and destabilizing juxtapositions, as they were in Part I.

The opening of Adam and Eve’s duet No. 32, “Graceful consort!” (“Holde Gattin!”) is in many respects the epitome of the beautiful as it was described by Haydn’s contemporaries. The return to a flat key (E-flat), the slow tempo, and the use of appogiaturas signal a dip into beautiful melancholy; theses features lend to the setting of a text about the pleasures of close companionship a subtle sense of “pleasing pain.” The pair’s ultimate and resoundingly pleasurable achievement of deep, mutual sympathy—the goal of sociability—is signaled in this duet in ways that would have been familiar to opera-goers of the time: first by Eve’s gently inflected imitation of Adam’s melodic line (beginning in bar 31); then by a gradual coming together of voices (beginning in bar 51); and finally by a complete congruence and coming together of their vocal lines for the concluding manifold repetitions of the text “with you...” (“mit dir...”; beginning in bar 117).

That careful performance was and is vital to the rendering of the beautiful in this work, and more generally in Haydn’s music, is apparent from his comments cited above, on the Missa in tempore belli. Not surprisingly, Haydn’s slow movements, which provide fertile hunting ground for the musically beautiful, are some of the most detailed with regard to performance indications. A fine example is Uriel’s accompanied recitative “In rosy mantle appears,” which opens Part III of The Creation.

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40 See Webster, “The Creation, Haydn’s Late Vocal Music, and the Musical Sublime,” 83-88 for a discussion of the sublime in the conclusions to each of the work’s parts.
Schiller observed that “beauty is for a happy race; an unhappy one has to be moved by sublimity.”

Citing this, Allanbrook suggests that the sublime was a trope that was perhaps “more appropriate to the troubled end of the century, to the distanced perspective of an older man, Haydn, and to the sacred vocal music he turned to at the end of his life.” Yet the same could well be argued for the beautiful, in the subtly reflective way Haydn invokes it. Indeed, the melancholy reflections of an older man—perhaps involving that subtle and paradoxical pleasing pain described by Burke and others—arguably find their clearest expression through Haydn’s beautiful.

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41 Schiller to Professor Süvern, Weimar, July 26, 1800, in Correspondence Between Schiller and Goethe from 1794 to 1805, vol. 2, trans. L. Dora Schmitz (London: George Bell, 1879), 326.

42 Allanbrook, “Is the Sublime a Musical Topos?,” 274.
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