Franz Josef Haydn (1732 – 1809) – The Clock Symphony (Second Movement) - Essential Information

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|  | Haydn moved to London (from Austria) and was commissioned to write a set of symphonies, now called the ‘London Symphonies’. The ‘Clock’ was one of these symphonies (the 11th).  **How does this movement fit into the Classical symphony structure?** A Classical symphony has four movements; our study piece is the second, which is the ‘slow movement’. The key of the symphony is D major but this movement is in G major, which is related as the subdominant key (the relative 4th). It changes to G minor for a time and there’s a short episode in E*b* before returning to G major  **What instruments did Haydn use?** Haydn uses a Classical orchestra. The strings play the prominent role, with 1st violins usually carrying the melody. The woodwind adds colour to the music: flutes double the 1st violins, bassoons double the cellos, and oboes sustain long high notes above the melody (an inverted pedal). The brass is ‘natural’ which means the horns and trumpets are restricted in the number of notes they play. They fill out the harmonies but can’t play fast chromatic notes – they play a supportive role.  **How might the instruments appear on the score?** The clarinets, horns and trumpets are transposing instruments – they are written differently to how they sound and have different key signatures.   * Violins, bassoons (fagotti), viola and cello / contrabass (double bass) are in C (concert pitch). The key of this movement is G major (1 sharp) * Clarinet (in A) parts sound a minor third lower than written. They are notated in F major * Horns (in D) sound a minor seventh lower than written (traditionally written without a key signature with accidentals added as needed) * Trumpets (in D) – sound a tone higher than written (traditionally written without a key signature with accidentals added as needed) |
| Melody | * The graceful melody begins after one bar. * The melody rises to a high D before descending, stepwise, through two octaves in bar 14, where a slower, chromatic phrase returns the tonality to the tonic. * Sequences are played with quavers by violins forming a four-bar phrase (beginning in bar 16) |
| Harmony | * The harmony is dominant with tonic for two bars before another modulation to the dominant occurs, following the additions of C# from bar 13 * The oboe begins in bar 16, sustaining an inverted pedal note on the dominant (D). * The harmony alternates tonic and dominant leading up to bar 46 when chords of C minor 7 and E diminished 7th lead to what is known as a 6/4, 5/3 approach to a perfect cadence. It resolves in bar 48 to the chord of Bb in the first inversion before leading to a cadence. * SECOND RETURN OF SECTION ONE: 1st violins introduce a new figure which is based on the notes of the underlying chord * In the third return of section one (after bar 104), the chord of Eb major leads to a German augmented sixth which, leads to a chord of D major and descends through two octaves. |
| Tonality | * G major (the subdominant of D major which is the key in the first movement) * Bars 20-23 form a balancing four-bar phrase and include some chromatic notes before the cellos and basses play C# in bar 18 to signal another modulation to the dominant * In bar 20-23, the first flute and 1st violins ascend through the notes of the dominant seventh, returning the tonality to the tonic for the next section. * After the repeat, the second time bar takes the music down to the minor key, G minor (the tonic minor) * In bar 40 the music modulates to B*b* major, the relative major of G minor * The music gradually returns towards G minor and settles over a dominant pedal from bar 56. Alternating Ds and C#s in 1st violins in bars 61 – 62 lead to a return to G major and on to the second variation on the main theme. * After the bar of silence in the third return of section one, Haydn uses a G as a pivot note to produce a change of key to E*b* major (the flat submediant) * In the final return of section two (from bar 121) the music first heard from bar 11 is given varied treatment in sextuplets, leading through a chromatic descent to the music heard from bar 16 * The final statement of the main theme (which begins in bar 135) is preceded by a rising scale, the second half of it chromatic, before the usual alternation of D and C# is also decorated (133-134) * In the coda (from bar 144) there are three bars of G major with the upper parts playing G – B - G. The final two bars present three detached tonic chords played quietly |
| Structure and form | * The first few bars 1-10 are varied on repetition later in the piece through… the addition of a flute that doubles the violins’ melody line / the viola playing triple-stopped chords instead of doubling the cello / the passing of a staccato quaver phrase from oboes to bassoons in bar 31 / the melodic and harmonic changes in bars 29-33 * When section one returns for the second time, it is based on the third bar of the main theme (the fourth bar of the movement) * SECOND RETURN OF SECTION ONE: 1st violins introduce a new figure which is based on the notes of the underlying chord * There is a complete bar of silence in the third return of section one * Following this is the penultimate return of section one (from bar 111), the final return of section two (from bar 121), the final return of section 1 (from bar 135) and the Coda (from bar 144) |
| Sonority / timbre / instrumentation | * The timpani are tuned to D (the dominant) and G (the tonic) * In bar 20-23, the first flute is heard for the first time, doubling the 1st violins * In the omission of lower strings in the third return of section one gives lightness to the piece. * In the third return of section one (bar 98 onwards), the 2nd violins, joined one bar later by cellos and double basses, take up the ‘ticking’ figure. 1st violins enter in bar 99 with the original melody, the orchestration boosted by sustained notes in the double-reed instruments and delicate decoration from flute 1. * In the third return of section one, all woodwind and string instruments alternate D and C# for two bars. 1st violins continue alone but gradually rise through the octave before being joined by flute 1 for one more bar * In the final return of section two, near the end (from bar 121), there is much fuller orchestration |
| Texture | * Beneath the oboe’s inverted pedal in bar 16, cellos and basses (who also have the pedal) alternate with quavers which rise in sequence from bar to bar. * Antiphonal writing can be seen in bar 40 where the 1st violins demisemiquavers are answered by a similar phrase in 2nd violins and violas |
| Tempo/metre/rhythm | * The melody has a distinctive dotted rhythm * At bar 50, woodwind instruments play the chords in the dotted rhythm used frequently in this section while the bass parts play staccato quavers. * 2nd violins and violas continue the semiquaver pattern introduced in bar 40 * During the penultimate return of section one, flutes, oboe 1 and 1st violins come in with the main melody while the 2nd violins introduce a new sextuplet variation on the accompaniment figure which is made of staccato , semiquaver broken chords of G major. This new rhythmic idea is soon incorporated into the melody, varying this return even more. These sextuplets also appear in the final return of section two |
| Dynamics / articulation | * At the beginning Bassoons play staccato and 2nd violins, cellos and double basses play pizzicato. This creates a ‘ticking’ effect. * The melody alternates between quiet (p-piano) and loud (f – forte) (bars 11-23) * The pizzicato accompaniment gets replaces by the 2nd violins, cellos and basses playing arco (with the bow) * When section one returns for the second time, the brass instruments and timpani enter with dynamics sustained at f (forte). * In the third return of section one, the flutes and bassoons take on the ‘ticking accompaniment to the first violins’ melody with a single phrase from the oboe in bars 66-67 * In the penultimate return of section one (bar 111) bassoons, 2nd violins and violas play to represent the ‘ticking’. They are then joined by oboes, clarinets, horns, trumpets, cellos and double basses * The ‘ticking’ accompaniment can also be heard in the coda which brings the movement to a close. |