

## Fuga in Joseph Haydn's Op. 20 String Quartets: The String Quartet Takes Flight

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At the conclusion of the finale—titled *Fuga a 4<sup>ta</sup> soggetti*—in Joseph Haydn's String Quartet in C major Op. 20 No. 2, the Latin inscription "Laus omnip. Deo / Sic fugit amicus amicum" can be found at the bottom of the last stave. Of special interest here is the second half of the inscription, "Thus does friend flee [from] friend," which Daniel Hertz interprets on three levels:<sup>1</sup> firstly, it refers to the word "fugue" itself, derived from the Latin words *fugere* (to flee) and *fugare* (to chase)<sup>2</sup>—a theme is announced by one instrument and the others seem to chase after it; secondly, it can represent the act of playing chamber music itself; and finally, in the broader historical context, Hertz believes that in the Op. 20 quartets, noting particularly the extraordinary fugues, Haydn has progressed further than any of his contemporaries, and that it would take none other than Mozart to "catch up."<sup>3</sup>

The Op. 20 string quartets have been described as being characterized by "extremes."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps in part due to these "extremes"—that is, the widely contrasting material, its dramatic scope and use of unusual forms—widely contrasting material, the Op. 20 quartets have attracted their fair share of criticism. Charles Rosen, in his renowned volume *The Classical Style*, articulates a commonly expressed view of Haydn's work in the 1770s—in one word, "awkward."<sup>5</sup> Much attention is drawn to the passages in which "thematic logic remains isolated," that is, dramatic effects are

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Hertz, *Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School 1740–1780* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 344.

<sup>2</sup> Paul M. Walker, "Fugue," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51678> (accessed 07/05/11).

<sup>3</sup> Hertz, 344.

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig Finscher, *Joseph Haydn Und Seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2000), 404.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, Expanded ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 149.

simply effects that “arrive unsupported by the rhythmic and harmonic conceptions.”<sup>6</sup> Special criticism is reserved for Symphony No. 43 in E flat major and Quartet Op. 20 No. 4 in D major (see Fig. 1). Their opening passages are singled out for their seemingly aimless meandering around tonic and dominant, and as a result the esteemed composer seems to be struggling to “enforce a sense of growing energy.”<sup>7</sup> (How different is this from Hertz’s praise of the same quartet as the “crowning jewel of the set”!<sup>8</sup>)

**Figure 1** Haydn, Op. 20 No. 4, 1st movement, bars 1–20 (Henle Verlag HN 9208, 2009)

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Haydn's Quartet Op. 20 No. 4. The score is arranged for four instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked 'Allegro di molto' and the dynamics are 'piano'. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The score shows the beginning of the piece, with a melodic line in the Violin I and a rhythmic accompaniment in the other instruments. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering bars 1-10 and the second system covering bars 11-20. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

However, it appears that, in Haydn’s Op. 20, we find not only the local “discontinuities” described by Rosen, but also quite startling global ones too. On one hand, the F minor quartet (No. 5) is a turbulent work that even seems to anticipate Beethoven in its

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Rosen is mainly discussing the so-called *Sturm und Drang* symphonies, but these works are pertinent in this essay, as they overlap chronologically with Op. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Rosen, 150.

<sup>8</sup> Hertz, 341.

“dark passion.”<sup>9</sup> The two-themed fugal finale uses two archetypal Baroque subjects (Fig. 2), and the contrapuntal working is carried out strictly according to the traditions of the learned style. On the other hand, the optimistic A major quartet (No. 6) inhabits a *galant* world: the first movement is in 6/8 time, and marked *Allegro di molto e scherzando*, the beautiful *Adagio* is virtually a coloratura aria for the first violin (it even contains a short cadenza), and the three-themed fugal finale is full of energetic syncopations and wide octave leaps. I will now focus on the quartets with fugal finales — those that seemingly demonstrate incompatibility between the *galant* and the learned contrapuntal styles—and argue that there is in fact substantial evidence to suggest otherwise, and that these works already demonstrate a solution to the integration of these two styles into a coherent new manner of expression. In doing so, I hope to express a somewhat more optimistic outlook on these quartets, recognising them not as a “crisis” (a commonly-used term)<sup>10</sup> but rather the beginning of a remarkable development. However, before we begin, we would do well to consider precisely what fugue was doing in a work of chamber music.

**Figure 2** Haydn, Op. 20 No. 5, 4th movement, bars 1–6



As a matter of fact, the use of fugal movements in chamber music would not have been as striking or unusual in Haydn’s time

<sup>9</sup> Warren Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, trans. Warren Kirkendale and Margaret Bent, 2nd ed. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1979), 143.

<sup>10</sup> This is discussed at length in Karl Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life in Music*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 252–78.

as they may appear in hindsight. It seems that they appear this way now due to a somewhat misleading genealogy linking J. S. Bach with later works of Mozart. A longstanding view has been that apart from Haydn's "isolated experiments" in Op. 20, the cultivation of counterpoint in instrumental ensemble music was "completely abandoned between [J.S.] Bach's death and Mozart's consequential encounter with the music [of the older German] master in 1782–83," but Warren Kirkendale is quick to refute this claim.<sup>11</sup> In Vienna especially—and we should note particularly the influence of the venerable Johann Joseph Fux—fugue was prominent in the works of Georg C. Wagenseil (a pupil of Fux), Ignaz Holzbauer, Georg M. Monn, and in particular, Johann G. Albrechtsberger.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Kirkendale notes that, although there was a general shift in the early half of the eighteenth century from the older contrapuntal styles associated with the church to the (generally) homophonic *galant* or chamber styles as a result of rising middle-class patronage in musical life, the distinctions between old and new, church and chamber, in reality were quite ambiguous at times.<sup>13</sup> As an example, Kirkendale reports that chamber sonatas and concerti were performed during church services, and the famous theorist Johann Mattheson even wrote that the "joyful . . . and pleasing music" of the theatrical style "should not be excluded from church, but rather have a proper and particular place there."<sup>14</sup> More relevant to our discussion, however, is Mattheson's view of fugal writing in the chamber style: "no one should fancy that such artistic feats are the sole prerogative of the church choir and organ. One can apply them fittingly also to many other things of a *galant* and worldly nature."<sup>15</sup>

Having now considered the use of the church style in contemporaneous chamber works, we can establish that the fugue should not be considered an anomaly in the Op. 20 quartets. To be sure, Haydn had already employed fugal finales in his Symphonies

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<sup>11</sup> Kirkendale, xxiii.

<sup>12</sup> For outlines of the life and work of these composers, see Kirkendale, 3–14.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Kirkendale, 33–36.

<sup>14</sup> Kirkendale, 35.

<sup>15</sup> Kirkendale, 33.



No. 3 in G and No. 13 in D,<sup>16</sup> which probably date from 1757–60, more than a decade before Op. 20.<sup>17</sup> As previously mentioned, this present study on Haydn's Op. 20 has the aim of demonstrating how elements of the baroque fugue and the *galant* style are in fact skillfully integrated into a coherent work in each of the fugal quartets. I will use two important types of evidence: firstly, I will show that James Webster's ideas on through composition and cyclic integration in the *Farewell* Symphony, expounded thoroughly in his monumental work *Haydn's Farewell Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style*, can be extended and further applied to the fugal quartets in the Op. 20; and secondly, that James Grier's recent work on invertible counterpoint<sup>18</sup> provides a convincing explanation of the ways in which Haydn fuses fugal techniques into the texture and style of eighteenth-century chamber music. As the backbone of this paper is formed by the synthesis of these two ideas, it is worth briefly outlining the significant contributions from the above-mentioned authors.

The chief purpose of viewing these quartets under the lens of through-composition is to show the subtle connections between movements, but most importantly to show that the materials in the fugue are in fact related to the rest of the work. Such material includes distinctive harmonies and modulations, and motivic similarities, which according to Webster operates not only within

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<sup>16</sup> Reginald Barrett-Ayres, *Joseph Haydn and the String Quartet* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd., 1974), 127–28.

<sup>17</sup> The article on Haydn in Grove Music Online has a detailed discussion of the chronology of his works: James Webster and Georg Feder, "Haydn, Joseph," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44593pg2> (accessed 07/05/11).

<sup>18</sup> James Grier, "The Reinstatement of Polyphony in Musical Construction: Fugal Finals in Haydn's Op. 20 String Quartets," *The Journal of Musicology* 27, no. 1 (2010): 57.

single movements but across entire works as well.<sup>19</sup> Hence, it would be beneficial to consider the fugues in the quartets Op. 20 No. 5, No. 6 and No. 2 as “culminations” (to use Webster’s term) of their respective works, and not merely as archaic endings.<sup>20</sup> As Grier writes, the rationale behind a fugal finale “emerges not only from historical precedent but also from Haydn’s changing conceptions of the relative weight each movement bears within the quartet as a whole.” Whereas in the earlier quartets, Opp. 9 and 17, the minuet and finale are characterised as lighter movements, the others being the “more serious” movements (the opening sonata-allegro and the slow movement), in Op. 20 this dichotomy is no longer so obvious; in fact, in the fugal quartets, the emphasis seems to be on the first and last movements.<sup>21</sup>

While Webster’s thesis on cyclic integration explores unity on the largest scale (the entire work), Grier stresses the ways in which invertible counterpoint creates unity on a smaller scale—that of phrases, periods and sections within movements. This difficult contrapuntal device creates a “continuous overlapping texture that generate[s] considerable forward rhythmic motion,”<sup>22</sup> and speaking of counterpoint in more general terms, this “rhythmic continuity, achieved through independent contrapuntal part writing, balances harmonic discontinuity.”<sup>23</sup> The manifold implications for Haydn’s compositional style are significant. A contrapuntal texture enables the composer to write longer passages without the need for frequent articulation points (cadences), the “invertibility” of each fugue subject allows motivic material to be shared amongst all instruments equally, since each subject must be designed rigorously to function perfectly as a bass line, middle voice and melody; importantly, a fugue is “self-propagating,” so to speak, in that the movement unfolds from the developments of a small number of short motifs, and in these quartets, Grier maintains that there is in

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<sup>19</sup> See James Webster, *Haydn’s “Farewell” Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 13–16 and 20–29 for some general ideas.

<sup>20</sup> Webster, “*Farewell*” *Symphony*, 294–300.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Grier, 75.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

fact one principal subject accompanied by up to three subordinates.<sup>24</sup> The emphasis on the principal subject already points forward to techniques used in Haydn's later works, in which a single theme may be the basis of an entire sonata-form movement. Hence, I will later briefly examine how invertible counterpoint is a solution to the problem of "incompatible" styles described above, but firstly, let us explore the features of cyclic integration that are apparent in the F minor quartet.

The "Fuga a 2 soggetti," as mentioned above (Fig. 2), is built on two archetypal Baroque subjects—two other famous works which use similar subjects (Fig. 3a and 3b) are Handel's chorus number "And with his stripes we are healed" from *Messiah*, and Mozart's "Kyrie" from the *Requiem*.<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 3a** Handel, opening of "And with His stripes" from *The Messiah*, HWV 56

Soprano  
And with His stripes we are heal - ed, And with His  
Alto  
And with his stripes

**Figure 3b** Mozart, "Kyrie" from *Requiem*, KV 626

Allegro  
Alto  
Chris-te e - le i  
Bass  
Ky-ri-e e - le - i-son e - le i

<sup>24</sup> Grier, 59.

<sup>25</sup> Barrett-Ayres, 122–23.

I am inclined to believe that the popularity of the first subject in Haydn's F minor fugue is partly due to the distinctive falling interval of the diminished seventh, and for extra potency, Haydn also incorporates a falling perfect fifth. This creates a two-layered voice-leading gesture that highlights an important semitonal movement featuring prominently in the first movement as well as the fugue:

**Figure 4** Voice-leading model, Fugue Subject 1, Haydn Op. 20 No. 5



As well as creating a distinct melodic profile, the gesture shown above also has harmonic implications that create a unified *Affekt* spanning the two movements. For example, at important cadential phrases in the first movement, semitonal movement in the bass (i.e. cello part) is often brought to attention, highlighting the diminished seventh leading-note chord,  $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$ . Bars 10 to 13 (the end of the first subject area) and bars 45 to 48 (the very end of the exposition with first-time bar) are shown below.

**Figure 5a** Op. 20 No. 5, 1st movement, bars 10–13

$[f]$   $p$   
 Vn. 1 Vn. 2  
 Va. + Vc.  
 $[f]$   $p$   
 $\boxed{f}$  V  $\begin{bmatrix} 6 \\ 4 \end{bmatrix}$  ( $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$ ) V  $\begin{bmatrix} 6 \\ 4 \end{bmatrix}$  ( $\text{Ger}^{\flat 4}$ )  $\begin{matrix} 7_1 & 8 \\ 6 & 5 \\ 4 & 3 \end{matrix}$

Figure 5b Bars 45–48

Figure 5b shows a musical score for bars 45–48. The score is in G-flat major (three flats) and 3/4 time. It features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music consists of two staves: a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The bass staff has a "piano assai" marking. The score includes a first ending bracket at the end of bar 48. Harmonic analysis is provided below the staves:  $A\flat: V_{4/3}$ , I,  $ii^6$ ,  $V_{4/3}$ , I,  $(\flat^6 vii^{\circ 7})$ , I, III,  $V_{3-4}$ . An enharmonic change is noted as  $F\flat \rightarrow E\flat$ .

Indeed, dissonance and chromaticism are responsible for much of the drama and tension in this quartet, which, as we saw above, lends itself to comparisons with Beethoven. Let us examine one more crucial passage in the first movement, the extraordinary modulations that occur in the coda. At the end of the recapitulation, after a tonic pedal, the music launches unexpectedly into D-flat major which incidentally is the key used to initiate the development (hence it is certainly justified to treat the extended coda as a little “second development”). The bass descends by semitones, arriving at a  $V^4_2-I^6$  cadence in G-flat major at bars 139–40. Then, at bars 141–48, the following astonishing passage appears.

Figure 6 Op. 20 No. 5, 1st movement, bars 141–48

Figure 6 shows a musical score for bars 141–48. The score is in G-flat major (three flats) and 3/4 time. It features a piano assai (*piano assai*) dynamic in the bass staff and a crescendo (*cresc.*) dynamic in the other staves. The music consists of four staves: two treble staves and two bass staves. The bass staff has a "piano assai" marking. The score includes a first ending bracket at the end of bar 48.

The movement from G-flat *minor* to the dominant pedal C is achieved by a clever re-interpretation of the bass note D-flat in bars 146–47. The D-flat major chord functions as a dominant to G-flat

in 146, but quickly becomes the root of Ger  $^6_5$  of F minor in the following bar, owing to the very crucial semitonal descent in the second violin from D-flat to B-natural. This exploration of the flat side of the circle of fifths is equally prominent in the fugal finale; in bar 61, G-flat major is firmly established as both subjects receive two statements each, and we find an expansion of the same movement from G-flat to C driven by a very long ascending fifths sequence beginning at 66, heading all the way to a clear subject entry in the tonic at 89. From there onwards, there are no more unusual excursions and the movement remains clearly in F minor.

**Figure 7** Voice-leading reduction of F minor fugue, bars 66–84

The figure shows a voice-leading reduction of the F minor fugue, bars 66–84. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is in F minor, indicated by two flats in the key signature. The score is divided into measures, with bar numbers 66, 69, 72, 75, 78, 81, and 84 marked above the treble staff. Below the staves, there are figured bass notations for each bar. Each notation includes a boxed chord symbol and a set of figured bass numbers. The boxed symbols are: G $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , G $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , and F. The figured bass numbers are: 4 2, 6 3, 5 3, 4 2, 6 3, 5 3, 4 2, 6 3, 5 3, 4 2, 6 3, 5 3.

While through-composition in the F minor quartet is projected mainly in similarities in harmonic language between the first movement and finale, similarity in melodic contour and character is the unifying feature between the first movement and its corresponding fugue in the Quartet in A major, Op. 20 No. 6. Moreover, if one still believes the F minor quartet to be excessively burdened with Baroque tropes (or indeed, “baroque” in its original sense!), Haydn surely has a convincing rebuttal in the A major. The marking *Allegro di molto e scherzando* in the first movement could easily apply to the fugue, and there are many similarities in the thematic material of both movements. In the fugue, the three themes are all “clearly individual”<sup>26</sup> and receive equal treatment: the main subject features playful syncopated octave leaps, the second is simply a syncopated descending A-major scale (traditional fourth species), and the third is a very short motif reminiscent of the second theme group of the first movement.

<sup>26</sup> Finscher, 405.

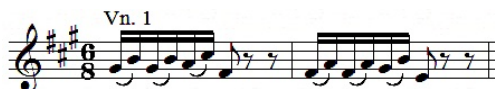
**Figure 8a** Op. 20 No.6, opening of fugue, showing first two themes



**Figure 8b** Third theme in fugue



**Figure 8c** Bars 22–23 in 1st movement



Perhaps it is also a testament to Haydn's contrapuntal skill that the fugue sounds as *galant* in character as the opening 6/8 movement—it is certainly a whole world away from the serious “learnedness” of the F minor fugue. Yet while the “through-composition” aspect is interesting, more important in this quartet than in Op. 20 No. 5 is the refinement of a three-part texture built on the principle of invertible counterpoint. In brief, the three subjects are so designed that they may function in any configuration—each of them work equally well as a bass line or a middle voice, or indeed a top voice. The table below draws on part of an elaborate table of subject entries appearing in James Grier's article.

**Figure 9** Subject entries in the exposition, finale of Op. 20 No.6 (Grier, 65)

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
1 vn I (S)	1 vn II	
5 vn II (A)	5 va	6 vn I
9 va (S)	9 vn I	10 vn II
13 vc (A)	13 vn II	14 va
17 vn I (S)	17 vc	18 va

Even in such a short space as a single exposition, it can be seen that Subjects 1 and 2 appear at least once in every voice, and in fact, Haydn comes very close to exploiting the full range of possibilities. Subject 3 is announced in every other voice except the cello, but it is used during the first episode as a bass line in bars 21–24, and hence the invertibility of all subjects is demonstrated without exception. This enables a lively exchange of themes between all instruments, accounting for the playfulness of the fugue as much as its contrapuntal sophistication. Perhaps the most glorious passage in the entire work occurs in bars 61–68: starting from C# minor at bar 57, canonic imitations built on the first and third subjects are channelled through a descending fifths sequence, arriving at the tonic at 61. However, Haydn has a surprise for us, for when the first violin initiates a complete entry of Subject 1, the second violin enters in canon a perfect fifth below before the viola joins in with Subject 2. At 65, this texture is inverted, so that the viola and cello form the canonic pair, the second violin receives Subject 2, and finally the first violin enters with Subject 3 to complete the quadruple counterpoint.



Figure 10 Op. 20 No. 6, finale, bars 55–69

The musical score for Figure 10 consists of three systems of three staves each. The first system (bars 55-59) shows the beginning of the passage with a complex rhythmic pattern in the upper parts and a more active bass line. The second system (bars 60-64) continues the counterpoint, with the upper parts featuring sixteenth-note runs and the bass line providing harmonic support. The third system (bars 65-69) concludes the passage with a final cadence, showing the resolution of the counterpoint and the ending of the rhythmic motifs.

This kind of passage is not entirely a surprise in this quartet. In the recapitulation of the first movement, a short canonic passage of merely four bars (Fig. 11) replaces the transition area in the exposition, linking the first and second themes in an elegant way. The brevity of this passage, and the fact that it is derived from material in the second theme area (Fig. 8c) highlights the effectiveness of counterpoint in the *galant* movements, a crucial point to which I will shortly return in the discussion of the C major quartet below.

**Figure 11** Op. 20 No. 6, 1st movement, bars 114–17

It seems that the achievements of both the F minor and A major quartets are consolidated and celebrated in the Quartet in C major, Op. 20 No. 2. It has even been suggested that, if all three fugal quartets are taken as a cycle in themselves, the C major quartet forms a culmination of the whole group!<sup>27</sup> There is much evidence in favour of this reading. Firstly, it displays *actual* indicators of “through-composition”: the second movement, a curious Capriccio set in C minor, ends on the dominant and segues immediately into the Minuet; furthermore, the first movement ends on a structurally weak cadence—the top voice ends on scale degrees 4–3, rather than the strong 7–8 or 2–1, and it is played *pianissimo*. This first movement ending is remarkably consistent with the endings of the first movements of the F minor and A major quartets. The former appears to head towards a strong conclusion, but the final cadence, although following a 7–8 voice leading pattern, arrives *pianissimo* unexpectedly; thus it is reasonable to regard the strong V–I cadence at the conclusion of the fugue as a “corrected” reiteration of the first movement’s weak cadence. Similarly, the first movement of the A major merely trails off with a tonic pedal, also at the *pianissimo* dynamic, but the work is concluded with a powerful unison statement of Subject 1 (Fig. 8a) and a perfect cadence with 7–8 in the top voice.

Secondly, a contrapuntal bias is revealed immediately from the opening of the C major quartet: I imagine, at its first performance, the audience must have been rather baffled when the main theme was proudly announced in the tenor register of the cello, with the typical bass-line figurations assigned to the viola in an almost parodic fashion. At bar 6, the cello ascends by step, and the first

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<sup>27</sup> For further discussion of this idea, see: Webster, “*Farewell*” *Symphony*, 294–300.

violin takes over the theme, but a fifth higher, in the key of G (“Is this not reminiscent of the fugue principle?”<sup>28</sup>).

Figure 12 Op. 20 No. 2, 1st movement, opening 12 bars

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Op. 20 No. 2, marked 'Moderato'. The score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin I has a whole rest, while Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello play rhythmic patterns. The second system shows the Violoncello and Violin II parts. The third system shows the Violin I and Violin II parts. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C).

As the movement unfolds, we discover that the concerns of the work are the “emancipation” of the cello from its former role of being solely the bass part, and the even distribution of thematic material across all members of the quartet to a much greater extent than in the F minor and A major quartets. This manner of writing can be found even in the “lighter” second and third movements

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<sup>28</sup> Barrett-Ayres, 134.

too: early on in the slow movement (bar 5), the cello once again takes on the main theme, and likewise in the opening of the Trio in the third movement, where it is the principal interest. But it is the first movement where the principles of invertible counterpoint are clearly applied to a *galant* movement, resulting in a composition whose coherence is maintained in the constant exchange and overlapping of motivic material. This kind of contrapuntal motivic “connective tissue” (as I call it) from the A major quartet (illustrated in Fig. 11) is used to a greater extent in the C major quartet, and the following examples will demonstrate some aspects of Haydn’s application of such contrapuntal devices in a sonata-form movement.

**Figure 13a** Op. 20 No. 2, 1st movement, bars 21–22

Shown in Fig. 13a is the beginning of the second subject area, which clearly continues from the contrapuntal textures heard at the beginning of the movement (Fig. 12). Initially, the polyphony is aborted after only two measures, but soon afterwards Haydn allows this canonic imitation to expand further, as demonstrated below.

Figure 13b Op. 20 No. 2, 1st movement, bars 33–36

The musical score for Figure 13b consists of four staves. The top two staves are for Violin I and Violin II, and the bottom two are for Viola and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in 2/4 time and features a fugal texture. The first staff (Violin I) begins with a melodic line that is taken up by the other instruments in a contrapuntal fashion. The second staff (Violin II) provides a counter-melody. The third staff (Viola) and fourth staff (Cello/Double Bass) provide harmonic support and rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and phrasing slurs.

The grouping of the instruments in pairs is incidentally a very common arrangement in all three fugues studied in this paper. Once again, contrapuntal treatment of a motif is used as connective tissue, but in this case, the passage illustrated in Fig. 13b forms the beginning of the closing area in the exposition, and so it also fulfils an important formal role as it prepares for tonal closure in the dominant. A similar passage in A minor appears at the end of the development section (bars 72–3), and finally near the end of the movement (bars 92–3) in the home key of C major. Considering the high degree of through-composition in this quartet, it seems that there could be no finer finale than the fugue to celebrate the fruits of the composer's labour.

As I wrote earlier, I have set out to provide a more optimistic reading of Haydn's Op. 20 quartets, questioning the commonly held opinion that these works represent a struggle or "crisis" of some sort, perhaps the problem of reconciling the contrapuntal idioms of the Baroque with those of the *galant*. However, I hope that it is clear, even with such brief analyses, that elements of cyclic integration and the principles of invertible counterpoint are applied with a high level of consistency in the fugal quartets. Consequently, I am led to conclude that, looking at the whole opus, Haydn's solution to the "crisis"—if there was one at all—can already be found. As James Webster observes, this notion of "crisis" seems to have roots in the teleological narratives of music history—with

respect to Haydn, the traditional view is that he attained “maturity” with the discovery (lo and behold!) of *thematische Arbeit* in the Op. 33 quartets, and as such, everything pre-dating those works is tacitly or overtly labelled “immature.”<sup>29</sup> This has serious implications for how we define the “Classical” style. We seem to reserve a special place for the era from 1780 to early 1800s, canonising the late masterpieces of Haydn and Mozart and those of the emerging genius of Beethoven. They are “given historiographical status, and further legitimised, by being made to stand for one of the greatest historical periods of Western music”<sup>30</sup> to the point that, in everyday discussion at least, it is almost impossible to discuss these works without using the word “Classical” or separating them from their status as “classics.” Of course, this can only make sense in retrospect, as there was certainly no concept of a “Classical” body of works in Haydn’s time. The fact that Op. 33, time and time again, has been heralded as a watershed work, written in an entirely “new and special way” to quote Haydn’s famed words, seems to have clouded the significance of the Op. 20, which are truly remarkable works in their own right—either that, or the unusual features of the Op. 20 are simply and perhaps unjustly rationalised as deficiencies in a still-developing, “immature” style. The ingenious craftsmanship and the successful use of invertible counterpoint in the fugal finales is testament to Haydn’s ability to “make the most” from a minimum amount of motivic material, which surely points forward to his highly distilled and economic use of a single theme in his later sonata movements (Quartet Op. 33 No. 1 in B minor is a particularly good example). I would go as far as to argue that the contrapuntal treatment of motifs in the first movement of the C major quartet (Figs. 12 & 13) is prototypical of the *thematische Arbeit* in Haydn’s later quartets. The Op. 20 quartets are a reminder that music, like any other language, is in a constant state of flux, and any attempt to draw clear stylistic boundaries must necessarily be an approximation; the term “Classical,” therefore, is only useful in this sense. In these works, the mixture of old and new, Baroque and *galant*, can be seen clearly, but equally

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<sup>29</sup> Webster, “Farewell” *Symphony*, 335–36, 341–35.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

clear is that these works also represent essays on the ways in which two seemingly conflicting styles can in fact be fused into coherent musical expression, and unfortunately (or fortunately?), it is for the same reason that these works evade repeated attempts at categorisation.

Where does this leave us in regard to the Op. 20 quartets? Are they somehow inferior to Op. 33, because they lack “balance,” “synthesis” and other such qualities deemed necessary to attain classical “perfection”?<sup>31</sup> It may be true that Op. 20 does not yet present a fully developed Haydn, but throughout this study, I have maintained that the stylistic problems these quartets present come already with their solutions. Of the three quartets with fugal finales in Op. 20, No. 5 in F minor is clearly the most reminiscent of the Baroque period, but I have shown that this is supported by common harmonic structures that pervade the outer movements. In the A major quartet, it is clear that a *scherzando* character is central to the work, and I have argued that invertible counterpoint is one of the most significant devices used to infuse *galant* ideas into a strict fugue, and fugal elements into a *galant* movement. Finally, in the C major quartet, which consolidates techniques found in the other two fugal quartets, there is no doubt that by now, all four voices in the quartet have become autonomous – a feature that would become the defining characteristic of the string quartet as a genre – and the fusion of the contrapuntal and the *galant* is complete. Thus the classical string quartet has already taken flight with Haydn’s Op. 20.

## APPENDIX

Below I have quoted James Webster’s highly entertaining “retelling” (parody?) of the common, teleological or evolutionist view of Haydn’s development as a composer:

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<sup>31</sup> For a good overview of the generally-accepted features of Haydn’s “mature style,” see Geiringer, 279–80, 284–86.

Once upon a time there lived a talented young composer named Joseph Haydn. He composed cheerful string quartets, but they did not fully satisfy him; he attempted to enrich them contrapuntally, but only in minuets. Then one day, the ghost of Johann Sebastian Bach appeared to him, and said, “Young man: your mission is a higher one. Go and write fugues, and incorporate them into your string quartets.” Haydn rushed to follow this advice; alas! his fugues did not go together with his cheerful tunes; his new quartets were failures. Heavy of heart, he wandered for ten long years in the wilderness of symphonic experimentation, until at last he discovered the secret of stylistic synthesis through *thematische Arbeit*. Then he returned home and began to compose Classical string quartets, and he continued to compose Classical string quartets the rest of his life. And everyone lived happily ever after.<sup>32</sup> [THE END]

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<sup>32</sup>Webster, “Farewell” *Symphony*, 343. It is suggested, for the sake of context, that pages 335–47 are to be read as well.



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## ABSTRACT

Haydn's Op. 20 has often been viewed as representing some sort of "crisis" later resolved in the Op. 33 quartets, which is often defined as the first work of Haydn's "maturity," and thus confining Op. 20 to the "Early Period." The traditional view of the Op. 20, one that is expressed even by such distinguished scholars as Charles Rosen, is that these earlier quartets are somehow less coherent in terms of musical logic. This essay will focus on the fugal quartets (Op. 20 Nos. 5, 6 and 2), often seen as unsuccessful attempts to enrich the *galant* idiom with Baroque counterpoint. However, I will argue that there is good evidence to suggest a greater unity in these quartets, and that such evidence falls into two main categories. Bringing to attention James Webster's 1991 work on through-composition and "cyclic integration" in the contemporaneous *Farewell* Symphony, I will suggest a reading of these works guided by inter-movement links, and based on the idea that, in each quartet, the fugues serve as appropriate "culminations" (to borrow Webster's terminology) of their respective works. I will then make reference to James Grier's discussions in his 2010 article on invertible counterpoint in these quartets (*Journal of Musicology*, vol. 27), a technique that I interpret to be a successful solution to the issue of the "incompatibility" of Baroque and *galant* procedures. In combining these two aspects, Haydn's fugal quartets are presented in a more optimistic light, and a case is made for the removal of labels pertaining to any notion of "immaturity."

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