Symphony no. 26 in D Minor, 'Lamentatione': Movement I
Haydn

Background information and performance circumstances

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) was highly influential in establishing the symphony, but to describe him as its 'father' as is sometimes done does not take sufficient account of the pioneering work of, for example, G.B. Sammartini (*c*.1700–75) and Antonio Brioschi (active *c*.1725–50). No composer of symphonies has surpassed Haydn in terms of combined quality and quantity. There are more than 100 symphonies – the exact number is still doubtful.

Symphony No. 26 in D minor is not among Haydn's better-known works, but it has many interesting and unusual features. The name *Lamentatione* (Italian for 'Lamentation'), almost certainly not the composer's own, is a little confusing, because the plainsong melody quoted in movement I (from bar 17) was associated with the *Passion* narratives sung in church in Holy Week from Palm Sunday to Good Friday, not with a setting of the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*.*

*Later you may like to read Appendix A at the end of this article.

The symphony dates from 1770 or a few years earlier. It is one of several from that time with characteristics of the *Sturm und Drang* style. *Sturm und Drang* was an artistic movement in Germany in all the arts, which climaxed in the 1770s (the term is German for 'storm and stress', and was adopted in retrospect from the name of a play written in 1776 by F.M. Klinger about the American Revolution). The aim was not, as with so much mid-18th-century art, to charm and please, but to disturb, even frighten, and display (by contemporary standards) extremes of emotion. To some degree *Sturm und Drang* is a precursor of Romanticism.

Aspects of our set movement that link it to *Sturm und Drang* include:

- Beginning in a *minor* key
    - Most mid-18th-century pieces began in major keys, which were more 'pleasing', less disturbing.
- The tense harmony in some of the minor-key writing…
    - …arising principally from *diminished seventh chords* and the *suspensions* associated with the syncopations.
- The rhythmic tension of the opening
    - where violins, doubled by oboes, are syncopated against an on-the-beat bass part for lower strings and bassoons.

Symphony No. 26 was composed while Haydn was in the service of the Esterházy family in present-day Hungary, probably soon after his promotion to Kapellmeister (court conductor), and for an orchestra that was small by his later standards.

Because of the inclusion of the Passiontide plainsong, it may well have been heard in a concert in church, though it is unlikely to have been performed in the course of a church service. It was certainly not music for the concert hall in the manner of the 'London' symphonies of the 1790s.

Performance Forces and their Handling

In the 1760s, the Esterházy court orchestra at times had only about six violins (divided between first and seconds), one player on each of the three lower string parts, two oboes, two horns and a bassoon. (A flute was occasionally added or substituted, but this is not employed in Symphony No. 26.) Haydn apparently directed from the violin; a keyboard continuo may have been used only in the theatre. Any performances of Symphony No. 26 in the 1770s and 1780s would have involved larger forces – perhaps up to two dozen.*

*Comments based on *The New Grove,* article on 'Haydn'.

Strings

Haydn wrote the customary separate parts for violins I and II, but in the opening eight-bar passage and in its repeats and developments (including bars 13–16), both parts are in unison.

Elsewhere, violin I is often more active (note for example its quavers against the minims of violin II in bars 26–31), although there is nothing more rapid or violent than the rising semiquaver scales at bars 37 and 120. Violin I is usually the higher part (although some quavers in the 'Evangelist' passage at bar 32 dip below the violin II melody). Overall, violin I's range is modest – about two-and-a-half octaves from A below middle C to D above the treble stave. Violin II goes equally high, but only where it is in unison with violin I.

The viola ranges from its lowest note tenor C to D a ninth above middle C. The ranges of cello and double bass are one and two octaves lower than this: these instruments generally move in octaves with the viola.

None of the string parts is technically very demanding. There is a little double-stopping in the violins, most strikingly in the final seven bars where both parts play repeated three-note tonic chords to clinch important perfect cadences. Elsewhere, as in bars 9–12 and 69-72, double stopping merely provides additional harmonic support. Everything in the movement is *arco*, with some *staccato* to help articulate repeated quavers or successions of quavers.

Oboes

Where violins play in unison, oboes usually double them, either at the same pitch (e.g. bar 45) or an octave above (bar 1) – although repeated-note passages in violins are often replaced by single long notes, presumably because Haydn's oboists would have struggled with their articulation. Likewise, oboists have much simplified versions of the violin parts in bars 57–63, with semibreves instead of syncopated scalic passages. Oboe ranges are 'safe' at two octaves from middle C.

Oboes take a few long rests (notably in the *piano* bars 9–16), thus providing contrast of sonority and texture, and a little relief to the players, but generally where violins have separate parts, so have they. Oboe I doubles *violin II* at the unison in most of the second subject (bars 17–38 and 100–21). In bars 40–44 oboes double quavers in both violin parts, but with generous rests between phrases. They achieve independence in bars 96–99 where oboe I has two rising arpeggio phrases that are independent of both violins, and in the closing bars where there is dialogue between violins and oboes with horns.

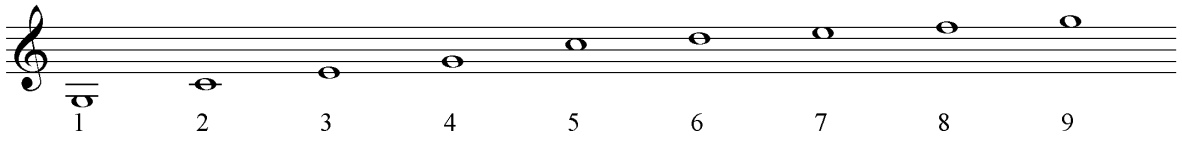
Bassoon
The bassoon plays in passages where the oboes play. It doubles the string bass line.

Horns
When Symphony No. 26 was composed, 'natural' horns were used: that is, the instruments lacked the valves introduced in the early 19th century.

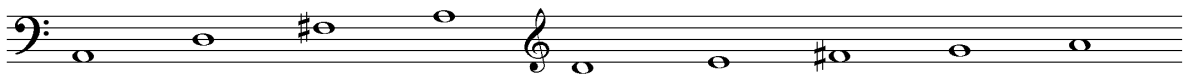
Haydn's players had available just the notes of the harmonic series, which limited them, except towards the top of the range, to the notes of a single triad. But they did employ special additional pieces of tubing known as *crooks*; when one of these was inserted into the instrument, it transposed the harmonic series to the key most convenient (usually the tonic) for that piece or movement. Whatever crook was used, the music was written in C (without key signature); so in our movement, with horns in D, written C sounds as D – *a minor seventh below*.

Ex. 1

Notes written for horns by Haydn



The notes above as they sound (at concert pitch)



Haydn uses horns mainly in the D minor and D major sections, but in the former he avoids the notes labelled as 3 and 7 in Ex. 1 because these sound as F *sharp*. In the A minor passage from the Development (bars 64–73), he is able to make use of written Cs and Ds (Ds and Es in terms of concert – that is, sounding – pitch); following on from this, Gs and Ds (concert pitch As and Es) are employed as the music moves through F major to the D minor at the start of the Recapitulation (bar 80).

In the F major part of the Exposition, Haydn avoids horns altogether. Neither concert F (the tonic) nor C (the dominant) was among the notes available to him.

Cembalo
In the Baroque period a keyboard instrument customarily formed part of the continuo, providing an improvised chordal accompaniment above a 'figured' bass line, and helping to fill out those harmonies that were implied rather than fully stated by the written-out parts. Most Classical textures were harmonically complete in themselves, and thus a keyboard accompaniment became increasingly redundant. The process was gradual not sudden, and a keyboard continuo was sometimes used in the late 18th century and beyond, even when harmonically and texturally 'unnecessary'.

The anthology score has 'Cembalo' (= harpsichord) in brackets against the first stave of the bass part, although the authority for this is unclear. As we saw above, Haydn may not actually have expected to hear a harpsichord in our set movement; but if one were used it would have helped in particular to fill out the opening eight bars, where strings and wind together create only a rather lean two-part texture. If the work were performed in church, a small organ may have been used for the continuo (see the article by Zaslaw referred to above, page 118).

Dynamics

Dynamic markings (just ***f*** and ***p***)* are few, but important. The bracketing of the opening *forte* means that this marking is editorial: Haydn would have assumed, as then customary, that a movement would begin 'strongly'. The contrast in bars 9–16 (*piano*) between the loud opening and the *forte* beginning of the second subject is deliberately pronounced and very effective.

*Where changes are limited to abrupt moves between ***f*** and ***p*** (without intermediate levels or *crescendo* and *diminuendo*), it is customary to speak of 'terraced dynamics'.

The *piano* marking when we hear the plainsong labelled 'Christ' (bar 26) is indicative presumably of the Lord's suffering. At bars 67–68 the *piano* repeat of bars 65–66 provides an echo effect.

Texture

Number of parts

The number of *instrumental lines* often exceeds the number of *parts*, because of doubling.

In bars 1–8 and similar passages, for example, the seven staves on the page might initially suggest a fairly full texture, but there are *essentially only two parts, each doubled in octave(s)* with horns prolonging or doubling some notes. One part is played by violins I and II in unison, plus oboe I an octave higher (and rhythmically simplified) – the other is taken by viola, with cello and bassoon one octave lower and double bass the octave below that. This prominent two-part texture is a reminder that in much Classical music interest is polarised between melody and bass, with other parts clearly subsidiary 'filling'.

Away from bars 1–8 and similar passages, we find:

- A single part in octaves (as in bar 43) – but this is rare.
- Three-part and four-part writing.

In bars 40–42, there are sometimes three parts (where violins are in unison) and sometimes four (where they play in thirds). The viola is independent of cello and double bass, instead of doubling as in bars 1–8.

In bars 26–31 there are four parts, as follows:

(i) oboe I and violin II:

the plainsong (labelled 'Christ') in the anthology

(ii) viola, cello, bassoon, bass:

the bass part (minims in viola, but with detached notes in lower octaves in the other instruments, to avoid too heavy a bass line)

(iii) violin I:

continuous quavers (although the first of a group of four quavers sometimes doubles part (i))

(iv) oboe II:

tonic pedal at first, independent melodic part later.

Type of texture

Most textures are *homophonic* – that is, a prominent melody in one or more instruments (either at the unison or in octaves) is accompanied by the other parts. The main melodic interest is often in violin I as customary in Haydn's time, but the plainsong used as second subject is in violin II, in order that the higher and more agile countermelody can be taken by violin I.

Occasionally the parts all move together in the same rhythm – notably in bars 9–12 and in the final bars 132–133. Such rhythmically-uniform homophonic writing may be termed *chordal* or *homorhythmic*.

Elsewhere a melody is supported by a rhythmically diverse accompaniment, as in bars 53–56, or in sections based on the traditional church melody (bars 17–38 and 100–121). In the latter case, we can speak of *melody-dominated homophony* even though the melody is not at the top of the texture.

The two-part opening bars (1–8) and similar passages have the vital characteristic of *counterpoint* – the clear rhythmic differentiation of parts which each have a definite melodic character, for the lower part is just as 'melodic' as the upper. Haydn's counterpoint involves combination of different melodies, and is not imitative (as would happen if different parts had overlapping entries that shared the same or similar melodic material).

Structure

Our set movement is in a fairly simple *sonata form*. Sonata form gradually developed from a simpler structural outline – binary form – in the early to mid 18th century.

In binary form there were always two clearly separated sections. Two such sections are still clear to see and hear in our sonata-form movement:

- Bars 1–44 (making the 'Exposition')
- Bars 45–133 (with both 'Development' and 'Recapitulation')

In binary form both sections were usually repeated. Haydn repeats the first section only in his movement. An interesting balance results: for while on paper his first section (bars 1–44) has half as many bars as his second (45–133 = 89), in performance there is virtual equality, for 44 + 44 (88) ≈ 89.

Usually the first section of binary form ended in a key other than the tonic. With minor-key movements this was normally the dominant minor or (increasingly) the relative major. Our movement begins in D minor, with the relative major, F, in bars 17–44.

The second section of binary form sometimes included repetition, brief or extended, of music previously heard. This could be:

- music repeated in its original (tonic) key, and/or
- previous music transposed from a related key to the tonic.

The two types of repetition together anticipate the recapitulation in many sonata-form movements of first and second subjects from the opening (Exposition) section.

The following table shows how Haydn's movement works in terms of sonata form. Keys are included, despite the separate section on tonality below, because sonata form must be understood with reference to tonality and modulation – indeed, we might say that the *essence* of most sonata-form movements is modulation from tonic to 'complementary' key in the Exposition, and return to the tonic just before (and during) the Recapitulation.

Bars	Section	Part of section, and comment	Key
1–44	**EXPOSITION**		D m – F
1–16		FIRST SUBJECT bb. 1–8, 13–16: principal syncopated idea; 9–12: contrasting idea. There is NO TRANSITION or BRIDGE PASSAGE. The music just shifts to the complementary key, F major.	D m
17–44		SECOND SUBJECT 17–38: based on plainsong melody; 39–44: end-of-section cadencing in which the previous violin I countermelody continues (these bars could be called CODETTA).	F
1–44	**EXPOSITION REPEATED**	This repeat is essential to the balance of the movement	D m – F

Bars	Section	Part of section, and comment	Key
45–79	**DEVELOPMENT**	Much is based on FIRST SUBJECT, but F, this section refers also to elements from SECOND SUBJECT	Returning to D m
45–52		Compare bars 1–8: 2-part texture – not an exact transposition, however	F
53–56		Compare 9–12; ornamentation different, and modulating (sequence).	F – G m
57–64		Compare 1–8 and 45–52, but note similar motion. Basically parallel 10ths, but with top part syncopated (many suspensions result); sequential.	G m, through F and D m to A m
65–73		Hints of SECOND SUBJECT melody in 65–68 (oboes); continuous quavers in violin I recall SECOND SUBJECT countermelody.	A m
74–79		'Re-transition': i.e. the concluding part of the Development, leading to the start of the Recapitulation.	A m, through F, to D m (V^7b)

Bars	Section	Part of section, and comment	Key
80–133	**RECAPITULATION**		D m – D *major*
80–93		FIRST SUBJECT = 1–14 repeated (except that horns are silent in 86–87), leading through…	D m
94–99		…a short TRANSITION ending on D m V, to…	
100–44		…SECOND SUBJECT 100-121: the plainsong, transposed to the tonic *major* (further, see 'Tonality'), and with horns playing an active role (impossible in the corresponding F major part of the Exposition); 122–133: an extended version of 39–44 transposed to D major (could be referred to as a brief CODA).	D *major*

Tonality

The movement employs the type of tonality based on major and minor scales, and dependent on functional harmony, which had evolved in the late 17th century.

In the Exposition, the change from D minor at the start to F major at the end is conventional, even predictable, for the time. As we have seen, there is a straightforward shift from D minor to F major, not a modulation effected during a Transition section, as more frequently happens in sonata-form movements.

The Development begins by continuing to emphasise F major for 10 bars rather than seeking immediate or almost immediate key contrast in the manner of many sonata-form Developments. After a touch of the subdominant minor, G minor (bars 55–57), Haydn revisits F major and even the original key of D minor (bars 61–63) before making his first

and only substantial new tonal move in the Development – to the dominant minor, A minor.

So far he has operated within the small range of keys conventionally regarded as most closely related to the tonic. More striking tonal change comes when the second subject returns in the Recapitulation *in the tonic major*.* Such a move within a single piece or movement was fairly novel: Baroque composers had favoured shifts from tonic minor to tonic major between rather than within pieces or movements. Later in the Classical period (and subsequently) moves from minor to tonic major, even without an intervening break, sometimes had great colouristic and emotional significance – as for example when Beethoven led into a C *major* finale for his C minor symphony (No. 5).

*The shift from minor to tonic major is easy to achieve, however, because D minor and D major share the same dominant (seventh) chord, A C# E (G).

Haydn's move to the tonic major springs from a need to recapitulate the second subject in a major key (he was not seeking a 'happy ending' as such). To have brought back the plainsong in a minor key rather than in its former major guise would have sounded incongruous or unseemly. Haydn could have returned to the tonic minor, and rounded the movement off with new music (or transposed his codetta material), but he chose not to, perhaps because this seemed too severe, even in a work with Passiontide connotations.

Harmony

The harmony of the movement, as normal in the Classical period, was *functional* – notably with much emphasis on the special tonic and dominant functions of chords I and $V^{(7)}$ in establishing tonality in perfect cadences and elsewhere.

The primacy of $V^{(7)}$ and I can be seen particularly clearly in

- Bars 9–12: the progression I–Vb in D minor is heard four times in succession. This gentle persistence makes a strong contrast with the more rapid, even restless, harmonic rhythm of the preceding and following passages
- Bars 17–25, where I or V^7 in F major (in root position or inversion) are stated or implied throughout. For example:
    - Bar 17: I, V^7b
    - Bar 18: I, V^7d (implied at beat 3), Ib (implied at beat 4)
    - Bar 21: V^7b, I, V^7d, Ib.

Chords other than I and $V^{(7)}$ are of course heard from time to time – including in bars 1–8 VI (at 2^3 and 7^2) and IIb at 6^3 and 7^3. The harmony at the start of bar 3 may be IV – the notes are G and B*b* – but the E at 3^3 suggests that the whole bar is IIb, then II, with passing notes F and D in the bass.

In bars 1–8 chord II moves each time to chord V, *the root ascending a 4th* (or *falling a 5th*). Ascending 4th/falling 5th progressions are particularly 'strong' harmonically – and to some degree those that are not actually V–I are weaker versions of that crucial formula. Classical composers, like their Baroque precursors, sometimes repeat ascending 4th/falling 5th progressions in sequence to form the *circle of 5ths*. The circle of 5ths can

just represent a walk round a particular key, with every chord visited (e.g. I–IV–VII–III–VI–II–V–I) – or can be more like a (series of) traffic roundabout(s) which you can enter or leave at any point, sometimes finding yourself in a different route (or key) on exit!

In bars 57–63 Haydn's circle of 5ths works as follows. Note that each bar begins with the first inversion of a chord, the root being sounded on the third crotchet beat.

bar	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	(64)
G minor	I							
F major	II	V	I	IV				
D minor				VI	II	V	I	
A minor							IV	(V^7)

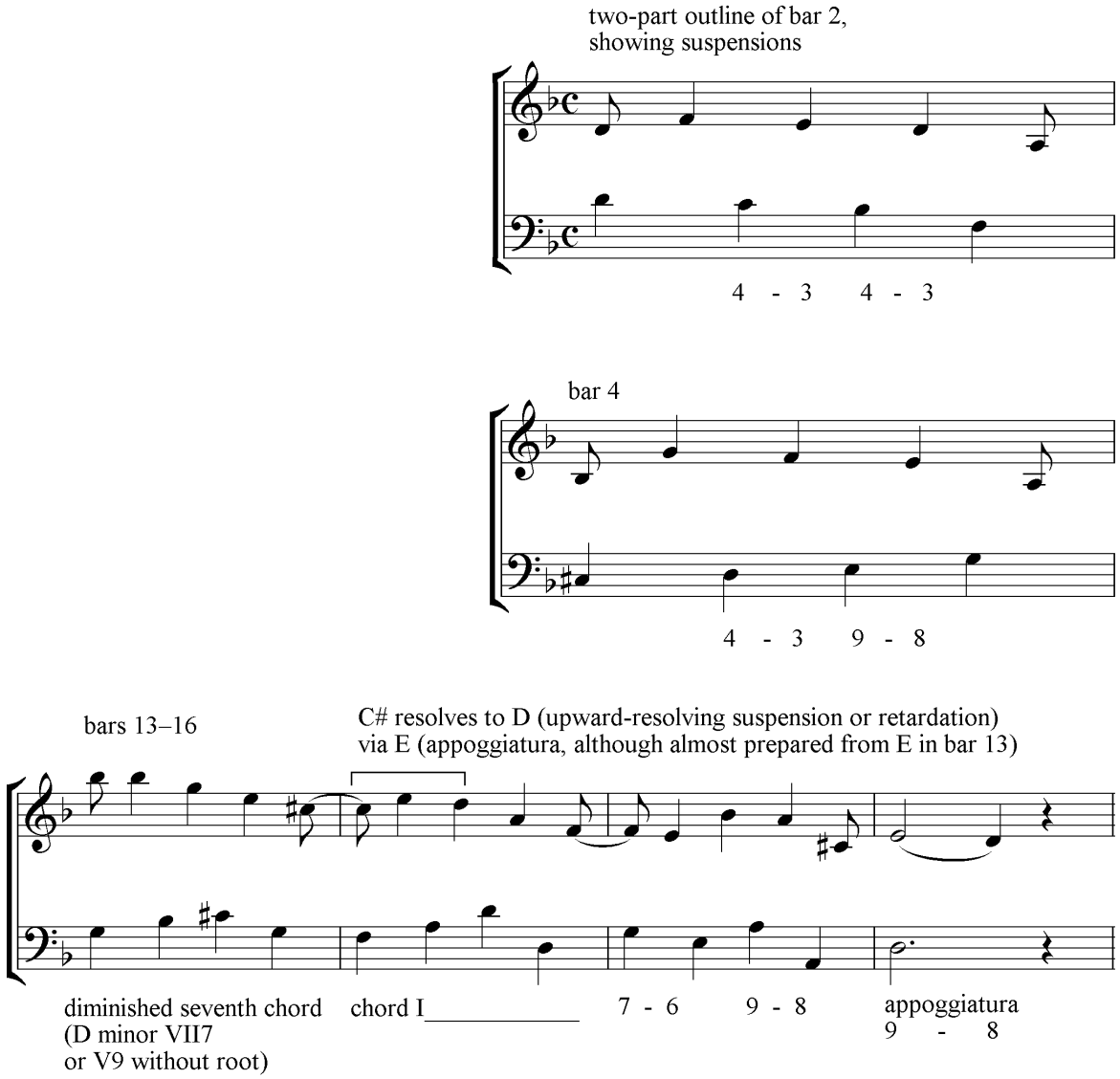
Occasionally diminished seventh chords, valuable in generating harmonic tension in minor-key writing, are heard.

- Bar 4 begins with C# B*b* and G. Together with E, these notes make up a root-position diminished seventh chord on C*#.*
    - The chord can be labelled D minor VII^7 (C# E G B*b*), but *in effect* it is a (tense) substitute for V^7b – the note B*b* replacing the A of C# E G A. So even here we have a form of dominant harmony – *but one unusually rich in harmonic tension.*
    - Another way of hearing the diminished seventh C# E G B*b* is as an incomplete dominant ninth chord (A C# E G B*b*, without the root.)
- Bar 13 arpeggiates the chord of C# E G B*b* in both parts. It moves to chord I, its dominant function being very clear.
- In the A minor passage from the Development, bars 69 and 71 have diminished seventh chords in inversion.
    - Each diminished seventh can be heard as the first chord of an inverted perfect cadence when it passes to Ib. That is, the harmonies of bars 69–70 (repeated in 71–72) are A minor VII^7c (or rootless V^9d), Ib.

Accented dissonance is an important course of harmonic tension in the first subject (bars 1–8 and 13–16). Ex. 2 shows the suspensions in bars 2 and 4, and also in bars 13–16, which end with a long and rather stark appoggiatura (a minim 9th above the bass). Prominent dissonances elsewhere include the:

- double suspension in bar 25 (9–8 in viola and 4–3 in violin II and oboe I)
- 'appoggiatura chord' formation in bar 31.
    - This is an embellished version of a common Classical formula at a perfect cadence in which all notes of chord V^7 except the root are suspended or sounded as appoggiaturas above the tonic, before resolving on to chord I.

Ex. 2



Melody

As explained under 'Texture', the principal melody line is most widely played by violin I, but the plainsong melody used in the second subject is entrusted to violin II (doubled by oboe I).

Like much plainsong, the second subject melody is predominantly stepwise, with just a few small leaps, the widest of which is a perfect 5th. The violin I countermelody provides effective contrast with continuous disjunct movement largely based on broken chords. In bars 26–29 the repeated three-quaver pattern F–A–F (starting on an offbeat) is a doubling and elaboration of the tonic pedal in oboe II.

The main melody of the first subject (bars 1–8, violins) is much more varied. Each of the first three phrases has

- *repeated notes* in syncopated rhythm, then
- an *upward leap*, including a striking major sixth in bar 4, leading to

- a *stepwise descent* that creates suspensions against the bass.

The contrasting idea in bars 9–12 consists chiefly of
- four *semitone descents* (F–E)
- alternately in low and high octaves,
- the higher ones elaborated with appoggiaturas and trills.

The effect, given the *piano* dynamic, the minor-key harmony, and the rests, is almost of four sighs – effectively contrasting with the tense and *forte* syncopated opening. Bars 13–16, although similar in general style to bars 1–8, are more disjunct, with some broken-chord shapes (notably the diminished seventh of bar 13).

Bars 1–16 and similar passages employ *periodic phrasing*, that is, the music has regular balanced phrases in multiples of two and four bars. In the second subject, derived from plainsong, the phrasing is a little less regular, with bars 17–38 constructed as follows:

Evangelist:	9 bars, with 2 bars + 3 = 5 and 2 + 2 = 4
Christ:	6 bars, arguably divisible into 4 + 2
Evangelist:	3 bars
Jews:	4 bars, with 2 + 2

Note: There is some use of sequence, but rarely of purely *melodic* sequence. In passages such as bars 53–56 and 57–64 all parts are involved in *harmonic* sequences.

Rhythm and metre

The most striking rhythmic feature is the syncopation at the opening and in related passages. The lower part is on the beat all the time, in crotchets, while for each of the first three two-bar phrases, the upper part begins with a quaver, then has crotchets, each beginning on the second (weak) quaver of a beat. To bring the eight-bar passage to an effective end, the rhythm of the fourth phrase begins with the syncopated rhythm quaver–crotchet–quaver twice in the upper part, followed by an unsyncopated bar.

Rests are skilfully used for purposes of articulation. The opening passage ends on the third crotchet beat of bar 8, with a rest on the fourth beat separating it clearly from the following contrasting idea. (Baroque composers tended to prefer greater rhythmic continuity; clear separation of phrases was an important part of Classical rhetoric.) The rests in bars 9–12 serve to separate the four 'sighs' (see above, 'Melody').

The second subject uses rests liberally in the accompanying parts, especially early on in a passage, in a manner familiar from much Classical writing. This provides, initially, light harmonic support in a slowish harmonic rhythm, before the more continuous writing that drives to the cadence (compare bars 17–18 and bars 24–25 in particular).

The second subject has, on paper, more quaver movement, but the coincidence of the syncopated and unsyncopated parts at the opening results in more or less continuous quaver movement here as well. The 'sighing' passage provides genuine rhythmic contrast, especially where we hear an unadorned minim chord (bars 9 and 11).

The metre is simple quadruple (four crotchet beats in each bar) with the signature **C**. In modern performance the given tempo, *Allegro assai con spirito*, may suggest a minim

beat – but the word *assai* is ambiguous ('very' or 'rather').* It is perhaps wise, however, not to take the movement so fast that the Passiontide plainsong begins to sound jaunty.†

*See article 'Assai' in *The New Grove*.

†There is further comment on tempo in the untitled review by J. Dack of Haydn's Symphonies (Vol. 8), L'Estro Armonico/Solomons in *Early Music*, xiii (1), page 145, 147.

APPENDIX A. *Supplementary information (not essential)*.

The title of the earliest manuscript of Symphony No. 26 is 'Passio et Lamentatio' (Latin: 'Passion and Lamentation'). Movement I quotes from a Passiontide plainsong; movement II has the chant for the words *Incipit lamentatio* with which the Lamentations began. For further information, see H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn Symphonies* (London, BBC Music Guides, 1966), pages 22–23; Robbins Landon, *The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn* (London, 1955), pages 285–289; and N. Zaslaw, 'Mozart, Haydn and the *Sinfonia da Chiesa*', *The Journal of Musicology*, i (1982), pages 95–124, in particular pages 114–116, 123.

A useful account of Haydn's symphonic achievement is to be found in C. Rosen, *The Classical Style* (Faber & Faber, rev. ed., 1976), pages 143–163. For broader background on Haydn, plus bibliography, see *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, Macmillan, 2nd edition, 2001) – available online, e.g. at some major libraries.