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978-0-521-45547-3 - Haydn's Jews: Representation and Reception on the Operatic Stage

Caryl Clark

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HAYDN'S JEWS

This fascinating study of ethnic theatrical representation provides new perspectives on the cultural milieu, compositional strategies, and operatic legacy of Joseph Haydn. The portrayal of Jews changed markedly during the composer's lifetime. Before the Enlightenment, when Jews were treated as a people apart, physical infirmities and other markers of 'difference' were frequently caricatured on the comedic stage. However, when society began to debate the 'Jewish Question' – understood in the later eighteenth century as how best to integrate Jews into society – theatrical representations became more sympathetic. As Caryl Clark describes, Haydn had many opportunities to observe Jews in his working environments in Vienna and Eisenstadt, and incorporated Jewish stereotypes in two early works for the stage. An understanding of Haydn's evolving approach to ethnic representation on the stage provides deeper insight into the composer's iconic wit and humanity, and into the development of opera as a cultural art form across the centuries.

CARYL CLARK is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto. She is the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn* (2005), and in 2007 she was guest co-editor of a special issue of *Opera Quarterly* on Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, with Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon.

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521455473

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First published 2009

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Clark, Caryl Leslie, 1953–

Haydn's Jews : representation and reception on the operatic stage / Caryl Clark.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-45547-3 (hardback) 1. Haydn, Joseph, 1732–1809. *Speziale*.
2. Haydn, Joseph, 1732–1809. *Mondo della luna*. 3. Jews in opera. I. Title.

ML410.H4C53 2009

782.1092–dc22

2009017314

ISBN 978-0-521-45547-3 hardback

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*In memory of my father
Charles Leslie Clark
(1909–66)*

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You may very well be asking yourself, as my friend and mentor, Neal Zaslaw, did several years ago: what's a goy doing writing about Haydn and the Jews? Certainly I didn't set out to write a book on the topic. When I arrived in Oxford on sabbatical in late September 2006, I began working on what I initially thought would be an extensive journal article on Jewish representation in *Lo speziale*. The topic had suggested itself during a short research trip to Eisenstadt in 2000, when I became interested in the local geography of the town. As the home and regal headquarters of the powerful Esterházy family, the palace in Eisenstadt was located immediately adjacent to the narrow winding streets and cramped quarters of the Jewish ghetto. A couple of days of research at the town's Jewish museum and local Landesarchiv confirmed the intimate relationship between the Esterházy family and the residents of that ghetto.

Numerous questions immediately began to circulate in my mind. As an employee of the Esterházy family, what was Haydn's knowledge of the Jews living in his midst, their religion, or forms of cultural expression? What aspects of Jewishness may have found their way into Haydn's works for the theatre, a performative medium in which Jewish characters and ethnic representation were commonplace in the eighteenth century? Might Haydn's employment of a ludicrously high male vocal tessitura for the comic tenor who created the role of the old apothecary in *Lo speziale* be rooted in the traditions of Jewish theatrical caricature? Did Mahler's intense interest in this opera, which he played a central role in reviving in German translation as *Der Apotheker* in the late nineteenth century, arise from an intuitive understanding of the apothecary's secret ethnicity? These were some of the queries driving my initial enquiries, which I presented in a paper at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in the fall of 2001.

While in residence at University College in Oxford in 2006–7, I was able to return to this project and give it my undivided attention. During

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the course of that wonderfully 'magical' year, my list of questions grew exponentially, as did my reading list. In my home-away-from-home, I established a routine of writing in the morning and early afternoon, followed by a brisk walk to the Bodleian Library or the Taylorian Institute for further reading and research. Two research trips to the continent – one to Hamburg and another to Vienna – bolstered my findings. My expanding paper was morphing into a book-length project. The 'unknown Haydn', a catch-phrase coined by the Hungarian scholars Dénes Bartha and László Somfai from behind the Iron Curtain in the late 1950s and early 1960s to describe their exhumation of Haydn's deep engagement with operatic composition and production during his tenure at Eszterháza, now took on a deeper resonance. The unknown Haydn presented here is an operatic composer who, from the outset of his career as a stage composer, was cognizant of the social meanings and practices of ethnic performance, and of the powerful cultural and political work performed by opera in the mid-eighteenth century.

Sitting in the Oxford Botanical Gardens one Saturday afternoon in early April 2007, the essential reason for disputing Haydn's operatic innocence became clear to me. As I sat in the warm spring sunshine, soaking up the rays reflecting off the honey-coloured stone walls and observing the renewal of life all around, I found myself somewhat ill-at-ease and strangely discontented, despite the distant laughter of carefree students punting on the Cherwell. I couldn't help but think about the role this particular place had occupied in the history of Oxford's Jewish community, the garden being the site of their cemetery until they were expelled from Oxford (and England) in 1290.¹ One learns this fact *not* from consulting a plaque in the garden, or from reading the standard history text, H. E. Salter's *Medieval Oxford* (1936), which makes no reference to the Jews whatsoever. Only in a book published in the aftermath of the Second World War, *The Jews of Medieval Oxford* (1951), does Cecil Roth address the historical significance of these lowlands abutting the river. The obvious question: why were the Jews omitted from the general history? Were the Jews not important enough – socially, politically, culturally, or intellectually – to include? Is Jewish history for Jews only? As Colin Richmond puts it: 'Why does it have to be a history

¹ The cemetery had also extended to the other side of the road (current High Street) until 1231 when the pious Henry III granted it as a building site to the hospital of St John the Baptist, which itself gave way to Magdalen College in the fifteenth century. Cecil Roth, *The Jews of Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1951). The date traditionally given for the resettlement of Jews in London is 1656, under Oliver Cromwell.

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of the Jews in medieval Oxford which discusses the Jews in Oxford in the Middle Ages? ... Jewish history permeates European history, [and] its absence from the history of Oxford and England tells us at once a great deal about Englishness.² My accidental journey led me to an analogous conclusion. Jewish history figures prominently in the life and working environments of Joseph Haydn in Vienna and nearby Eisenstadt in the mid-eighteenth century, yet its very absence from our music history books tells us as much about ourselves as about the myths we continue to perpetuate. For among the many representations of Otherness found in Haydn's operas is that of the Jew.

I intuitively understand the desire to idealize Papa Haydn. I too have done so for much of my adult life, having naturally gravitated to studying the music of the mythical 'father of the string quartet' and 'father of the symphony' when, like Haydn, I moved from a small village to the city to continue my formal education. Having grown to idealize my own father, who died suddenly at the age of fifty-seven when I was thirteen years old, I was only too willing to transfer some of my own affections onto this surrogate parental figure, especially one whose formative musical experiences I naively perceived as mirroring my own. Like Haydn, my early musical tutoring began at the knee of my father, an amateur musician who introduced me to the piano and violin, took me to weekly church services where he served as organist, and with his powerful tenor voice taught me to sing out confidently. After he died, I inherited his position as organist in our small church, earning my first 'real' money. My father also enjoyed playing practical jokes, and was frequently described by family members and close friends as 'the life of the party', especially when recounting funny stories or leading communal singing sessions from the keyboard. His reputation as a practical joker was also shared by the witty humorist Haydn, linking the two figures in my imagination. Being on the cusp of adolescence when my father died, I only ever saw him through the eyes of a child; but in retrospect, I realize I placed him on an imaginary pedestal, a monument rivalling in my mind the statue erected to Haydn in his humble birthplace in Rohrau, Lower Austria. That he, like my father, was a more complicated human being, reflecting as well as shaping his environment, only occurred to me much later.

In learning about Haydn I have come to know myself better. Could there be a better reason for devoting so much of oneself to the field of

² See Colin Richmond, 'Englishness and Medieval Anglo-Jewry', ch. 12 in Sheila Delany (ed.), *Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 214.

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musicology, and to the study of Haydn's operas in particular? For the many good times shared, the many life lessons passed on, and the magnificent world of music he opened up to me, I dedicate this book to the memory of Charles Leslie Clark.

A research project of this magnitude cannot be completed without the help and guidance of many others. Over the past several years I have benefited greatly from the assistance of countless family members, friends, colleagues, graduate students, research assistants, librarians, and professionals, all of whom played an important role in my operatic project. I first salute those who, in many different locations and on more than one occasion, patiently listened to my questions and guided my arguments, provided a helping hand or a word of encouragement, and ensured that books, journals, librettos, plays, scores, maps, illustrations, and other research materials were made available.

In the early stages, before I knew where my tentative research ideas would eventually lead, several people helped to get the project off the ground. Johannes Reiss of the Austrian Jewish Museum in Eisenstadt and Roland Widder of the nearby Landesarchiv introduced me to the local history and geography of the town and to the 'Siebengemeinde'. Dr Walter Reicher of the Haydn Foundation Eisenstadt also encouraged my initial interest in the political organization and topography of the town, and put me in touch with local historian Josef Pratl, who generously shared his (as yet) unpublished research. Esterházy historian Rebecca Gates-Coon also provided invaluable help at the early stages of the project, as did the revered Haydn scholar László Somfai, with whom I spent a warm, sunny day touring Eszterháza several years ago, and who on numerous occasions assisted my research in Budapest. I am very grateful as well to Dr Armin Raab, and his colleagues, Silke Schloen and Christine Siegert, at the Joseph Haydn-Institut in Cologne, where I spent some productive research time.

Funds for research undertaken in Vienna in 2003 and 2007 were provided respectively by the Joint Initiative in German and European Studies in the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto, and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). My research took me to numerous locations in Vienna, including the Musiksammlung and Theatersammlung of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, the Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, the Bibliothek der Israelitischen Kulturgemeinde Wien, the Gustav Mahler-Institut, and the main library of the University of Vienna. Many professionals in all of these outstanding facilities went out of their way to bring me related

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materials and later to answer email enquiries. I'm also grateful to Corinna Turner of the Wiener Sängerknaben, who toured me around their facilities in the Augartenpalais, and to the very helpful archivist there, Tina Brechwooldt. Peter Poltun, head of the Musikarchiv at the Vienna State Opera, generously rummaged through a dark attic room in the rafters of the Opera, and was just as excited as I was to find there, in an old grey box, the uncatalogued conducting score of *Der Apotheker* used by Mahler in 1899. Chefdramaturg, Oliver Lang, made scanned copies of relevant examples from this score, reproduced in Chapter 4. (While studying this material at the Staatsoper, I met Bryn Terfel, who was there singing Don Giovanni and Falstaff in the same week. Now there would be one amazing apothecary – in the late nineteenth century version by Hirschfeld, that is! More realistic are my hopes that a production of the opera may be realized in Toronto through the prodigious efforts of Haydn enthusiast David Hamilton, and conductor Kevin Mallon of the Toronto Chamber Orchestra.)

For reproductions of additional maps and visual material found in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, my sincere thanks go to: Mag. Gerhard Holzer of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften; Dr Ferdinand Oppl, of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institut, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv; Professor Dr Otto Biba of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien; Dr Tibor Kovács, Director of the Hungarian National Museum; Holly Frisbee of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Auste Mickunaite of the British Library; and especially to Tom Harper, Curator of Antiquarian Mapping. Closer to home, the Inter-Library Loan Department at the University of Toronto, Marcel Fortin of Geographic Information Systems, Amanda Wagner of the Digital Imaging Studio, and Kathleen McMorro and Suzanne Meyers-Sawa at the Faculty of Music Library, offered much-needed assistance at various stages. For the preparation of the musical examples, I am once again very grateful to Tim Neufeldt. (Assistance from the Otto Kinkeldey Publication Endowment Fund of the American Musicological Society ensured that all images, permissions, and examples could be acquired and digitized without breaking my bank account.)

Several North American-based scholars working in eighteenth-century musicological studies, many of whom have spent much more time in Vienna, helped me refine my ideas at later stages of the project. James Dack, Bruce MacIntyre, Janet Page, Gerrie Rohling, and Jen-yen Chen engaged in some spirited email exchanges and telephone calls when I was brainstorming issues pertaining to mid-eighteenth-century church music and liturgical practices. As readers of this book will see, Chapter 3 is

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deeply indebted to the formative work undertaken by a former University of Toronto graduate student, Rebecca Green. Rita Steblin, an independent scholar and fellow Canadian now living and working in Vienna, provided on-the-ground research assistance there, as did musicologist Morton Solvik, my close friend and fellow Cornellian, and his wife Doris. Special thanks also goes to Marsha and Géza Tatrallyay, who provided a comfortable and conveniently located place to stay, and with whom my husband and I have shared many a heart-warming evening – at home and at the opera. Jürgen and Angela Reitmaier were also engaging hosts in Berlin.

Several music colleagues in Oxford offered help and advice along the way, including opera scholars Suzanne Aspden, Michael Burden, Emanuele Senici, and Reinhard Strohm, as well as Margaret Bent, Bojan Bujic, Jonathan Cross, Peter Franklin, Julian Johnson, Susan Wollenberg, and Susie Clark. I'm grateful to the graduate students at Oxford for inviting me to present my work in their colloquium, and to Estelle Joubert, now a SSHRC post-doctoral fellow at the University of Toronto, for her warm welcome there. At Cambridge University, where I also presented parts of this research, Dean Sutcliffe offered valuable advice and encouragement, as did his new colleague back in New Zealand, Nancy November. Once back home, Karen Painter, after hearing my AMS paper in the fall of 2007, invited me to present aspects of my work at the University of Minnesota, graciously hosting me for lectures in the Department of Music and the Institute for Advanced Studies – both of which generated lively discussions that helped me refine my arguments.

Several research assistants from various departments at the University of Toronto helped gather, sift through, and digest lots of material over the years. In chronological order, I thank Drew Stephen, Janette Tilley, Dana Astmann, Caroline Matt, Tim Neufeldt, Marija Euchner, Michael Wells, Dawn McKenna, Keren Zaiontz, Nathan Martin, Eva Branda, Jaclyn Cepler, and Eugenio Quarantini. I am exceedingly grateful to them all for their close readings, fascinating insights, translation assistance, and general intellectual stimulation. As we all learned while working together, opera scholarship benefits tremendously from the multi-disciplinary exchange of ideas. 'Operatics', the newly formed interdisciplinary faculty and graduate student study group funded through the Jackman Humanities Institute here at the University of Toronto, testifies to the success and continuing promise of a collaborative and inter-generational model of scholarship.

To ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman, whose knowledge of the Esterházy lands runs deep, Ruth HaCohen, with whom I am about

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to embark on a Faculty Network Exchange Fellowship at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and historian Kenneth Stow from Haifa University, who taught for a semester in the Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto – thank you for helping me to recognize the importance of asking probing questions from different perspectives. We're starting to close the (ethno)-musicology divide.

Although I am entirely responsible for imperfections in this book, I especially want to thank those colleagues who helped me refine and revise my ideas at later stages of the project by reading and commenting on drafts of selected chapters: Sherry Lee (Introduction); Tom Beghin and Edmund Goehring (Chapters 1 and 2); Matthew Head and Emanuele Senici (Chapter 3); and Sander Gilman, Lawrence Kramer, Richard Leppert, Stephen McClatchie, and Marc Weiner (Chapter 4). Roger Parker read several different sections at various stages, and, in his unstintingly gifted way, helped me to conceptualize what a book on the topic of Haydn's Jews might actually look like. My close colleague and dear friend Linda Hutcheon offered invaluable support at every step of the way. Her reading of the entire draft manuscript led to many improvements and helped me refine my theorization of Orientalism and ethnic representation. Teaching a joint graduate course on opera with her at the University of Toronto over the last decade has been a highlight of my teaching career. Also vitally important has been our co-organized lecture series, 'The Opera Exchange', begun in 2001 with the help of Professor Janice Stein, now held in conjunction with the Canadian Opera Company (twenty-four events and counting...).

Although I returned from Oxford with a book in the making, the manuscript was considerably expanded, fleshed out, rewritten, and revised over the course of the following two summers in Onteora. My family's summer retreat has been in the Catskill Mountains of New York State for many years now. To my many friends in the beautiful 'Hills of the Sky', I offer my heartfelt thanks for the privilege of reading, writing, working, playing, conversing, eating, drinking, making music, and, yes, sleeping, in the most charming library I know.

To the commissioning editor at Cambridge University Press, Victoria Cooper, I offer my sincere thanks. Recognizing instantly the significance of the subject matter, she deftly shepherded the manuscript through a thorough review process. Without her guidance and support, this book would never have appeared in the celebratory Haydn year of 2009. Comments offered by the anonymous peer reviewers were especially valuable as the book took its final shape, as was the editorial assistance of

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Camilla Blakeley. I'm also very grateful to editor Rebecca Jones, expert copy-editor Mary Worthington, production editor Christopher Hills, and indexer Rosanne King.

My immediate family has demonstrated more grace and forbearance than one could ever reasonably expect. To my children, now blossoming into dynamic and relentlessly inquisitive young adults, I say 'thanks for getting it'. Tessa continues to teach me about human nature and a fast-changing world, while Reid, a budding historian who was pressed into service as a research assistant one summer, is mature beyond his years. Lou, my husband for over thirty years now, continues to be my biggest fan and supporter. He entered into the intellectual heart of this project like no one else, reading every word and offering excellent advice along the way, listening to my arguments in the making and helping me make sense of them, insisting that I laugh and take breaks when the going got tough, and offering patient encouragement every step of the way. He is the light and love of my life.