GRESHAM COLLEGE

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CLASSICAL MUSIC, NOISY LISTENING

PROFESSOR TOM SERVICE

Our Concert Halls Don't Work

Something strange happened in Malmo at the end of last month.
A packet of chewing gum caused a small-scale riot.

This music, composed in 1902 as a love-letter to his wife, Alma, is one of Gustav Mahler's most tender utterances. And his quietest, too. A lady opened her chewing gum, a man next to her took the packet and threw it to the ground. After the finale - which is much, much louder - she hit him, and Malmo's concert hall was the scene of classical-music fisticuffs.

This seems like one of those humorous incidents in which the veneer of classical music restraint crumbles to reveal the violence within: but it is more significant than that. It could have happened anywhere around the world, anywhere that a particular culture of listening has developed around orchestral music: it shows both the exquisite acoustic refinement of modern concert halls so that a sound as small and insignificant as a chewing gum wrapper can scar completely the experience of a Mahler Symphony, and it reveals how fragile the listening cultures of classical music really are.

In what other sphere of life would so tiny a sound have such a great impact? Not even in at the Cenotaph during the two-minute silence last weekend; not in the cinema; not in a church service. And the violence of the reaction also shows how the collectivity of the classical music experience of listening, of being part of a group of around 2000 people sharing the same experience, has its limits: if we're honest, our inner feelings of sublimity matter more - at least they mattered more to some people in Malmo! - than allowing other people to do what they want or possibly need to. Live and don't let live... Who knows why that gum was necessary at that moment?...

And there are a host of other issues this curious incident of the gum in the Mahlerian night-time shows us:

- Contemporary concert hall design means that everything is audible, and nothing is hidden, and there are no aesthetics apart from conference-hall blandness so that our attention ought to be focused only on what's happening on the stage. These aren't rooms that celebrate the audience, they're rooms in which we become a kind of self-loading musical freight, shipping ourselves in and out every night.

- Limiting our responses to basically two options: applaud at the end - not in between movements of a concerto or a symphony, and only very occasionally after an aria in the opera house - and be quiet. Be quiet!
- There are no other musical cultures which have these strictures. Other genres have other conventions - applauding after solos in jazz, for example: but imagine if the rules at pop gigs were that you didn't applaud until the end of the set. Ed Sheeran and Stormzy would leave the stage if they weren't getting some noise back from their crowds. And what goes for them, it turns out, also goes for Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Berlioz...
- But this radically limited - and binary - range of responses and the architectural, acoustic, and cultural conditioning that goes into it, is an anachronism for the vast majority of music that's played in them, everything from Hildegard to Mahler, and quite a lot thereafter too.
- What are those other possibilities? Talking, commenting, gasping in awe, crying with emotion, laughing in delight, booing with derision - sometimes a lot worse than that! - conversing on what you're experiencing with your neighbour, creating hubbub, giving attention and not giving attention to the musicians or the singers, or cheering so much after a movement that it has to be repeated, something that composers from Mozart to Elgar wanted and needed as indices of their success. Silence and applause were possible too, of course!... You'll need to do all these later…
- The consequence is that we listen to an endless parade of musical works in our concert halls and our classical music cultures, but we are not invited to be part of them. And that means that we're not truly listening to them at all, because we're not participating in them as listeners - as the moving, talking, noise-making, flesh-and-blood listeners for whom so much of this music was written, and which their composers expected. In fact, it means that these musical works simply aren't fully functioning or functional: without our involvement as noisy listeners, this music, especially music of the 18th and 19th centuries, simply isn't happening in the way that it was intended, by the composers and cultures for whom it was made, from Paris to London to Vienna to Berlin. These musical works don't work.
- In fact: I don't believe our terminology is fit for purpose either. There are no such things as fixed musical 'works': instead, the repertoires of 'classical music' are made of pieces that are staged as events for our participation. If we don't participate in them, the event doesn't happen…
- Stendhal, in 1824 - saw this problem coming, in his in-life biography of Rossini. ***"What will result from this scrupulous silence and continuous attention? That fewer people will enjoy themselves".***

So today, we are going to try and restore the essential noise of our listening to a couple of specific musical cultures: opera and orchestral music in Paris in the late 18th century, and Vienna in the early 19th, thanks to our fabulous string quartet!... And for the first time since 1778, we're going to make Mozart's Paris Symphony sound as it really should do: that piece, and whole repertoires of music, are made as a dialogue with our responses as listeners - we're supposed to be part of the piece, and we're going to make it happen today! This is active listening today, you are going to have to get involved!

The Paris Opera in the 17th and early 18th centuries: Don't Listen!

Jean-Baptiste Lully might be the greatest and most successful composer of music that he knew would not be listened to. He was the most powerful figure in French music at the court of Louis XIV, and Superintendent of, effectively, the nation's musical life. From 1673 to 1687, he was the exclusive composer of the new genre of French music-drama at the Academie Royale de la Musique, which was here in the Palais Royale.

Lully's music wasn't listened to? What am I talking about? Well - his operas were the site of spectacle, entertainment, and the theatre of aristocracy that this theatre became. Here's a picture of a production of Lully's Armide there in 1761; one of his most successful Tragedie-Lyriques, the piece stayed in the repertoire long after Lully's death in 1687.

Actually, the manner of that death proves the point about what was heard and not heard at performances of his music.

- Lully conducted with a staff, banging it into the ground to indicate the beat and the tempo to his musicians. At a performance of his Te Deum - to celebrate the King's recovery from surgery - Lully hit his foot with the staff, developed gangrene, and died. Ironically, he refused surgery. [CLIP 3 - Te Deum, Sinfonia]
- Conducting was noisy - effectively, another percussion part: this supposedly silent profession wasn't at all in the 17th century! Even after people realised after Lully's death that it probably wasn't advisable to bang a massive pole into the ground, they still hit music-stands with sticks, creating a percussive noise - a "terrible racket" as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, philosopher and sometime composer himself put it - that was essential to keep the musicians together.
- And if conducting was noisy then and silent now, that was also the case for listening at the opera!

As James Johnson makes clear in his magisterially brilliant book *Listening in Paris*, in the sort of thing that might have happened at a performance at the Opera, listening with rapt attention, as we might understand it today, was one decidedly unfashionable option among many.

- *"Lackeys and young bachelors milled about in the crowded and often boisterous parterre" - so boisterous that at one performance in 1744, they rushed over the wooden barrier that separated them from the orchestra pit, tumbled over it, and ended up on stage. Let's go up the echelons of the theatre, and into different social circles: "Princes of the blood and dukes visited among themselves in the highly visible first-row boxes" - seeing and being seen!. "Worldly abbes chatted happily with ladies in jewels on the second level, occasionally earning indecent shouts from the parterre when their conversation turned too cordial. And lovers sought the dim heights of the third balcony - the paradise, le paradis - away from the probing lorgnettes".*
- This poem sums it up!
- Have a look at the theatre: there are a few things to note! You can see in the parterre, the stalls - except there are no seats, everyone - every man, I should say, since women weren't allowed down there - is standing. There are a couple of soldiers keeping the peace either side of them. In fact, the theatre employed a total of 40 soldiers with loaded muskets during performances, to ensure "the order due a Royal House". This can't have been the start of the evening, since it was highly unfashionable to arrive on time. If you were in a box, you would want to make sure you had arranged the right rendezvous for the social, sexual, or political shenanigans of the evening. It's hard to make out, but there are 6 boxes actually on the stage - these were prestigious places, but meant you could hardly see any of the action - but that wasn't the point, since your aristocratic presence meant that you were part of the theatre simply by being there - that was the whole point of the opera, the spectators were part of the spectacle.

- An amazingly baroque system of patronage ensured that everyone knew their place, from the King and the Queen downwards, so that the opera was a mirror of the hierarchies of Parisian and French society. And taking their cue from royalty downwards, everyone knew that to listen during the opera was hardly the point. Or to watch it, for that matter: because the partitions between the boxes extended all the way to the edge, from floor to ceiling, and because they faced directly opposite the theatre rather than being turned towards the stage, you had to make a real effort just to see the singers and dancers. The composers and writers themselves were less than privileged in this set-up: as they were all men at that time, they would get on down to the masculine environs of the parterre - but the police suspected them of booing and whistling their own and others' creations, so they were banished from the parterre to a bench at the back. Just because you wrote the thing, didn't mean you would get special treatment...
- The Opera could be the site of Dangerous Liaisons: this painting, *Le petit-loge* shows the sort of meeting with ballet dancers and courtesans that was de rigeur at the Opera.
- The auditorium was illuminated enough so that everyone could see one another - that's what was important - but full of smoke from the lamps, and there were plenty of dark recesses where any kind of nefarious activities could be got up to in the gloom.
- "The paradise" is my favourite misnomer of the Paris opera, up there in the darkness - the smoke-giving gas lights wouldn't illuminate all the way up there, and there was less risk of actual bodily harm than in the parterre, but the lovers had to contend with the discomfort of the wooden benches. And the loos. Encircling the paradise, these wooden tubs in tiny closets, as James Johnson says, "sometimes smelled so bad that the entire balcony emptied en masse". Paradise...
- All this influenced listening, or not listening! Here are some reports from the time:
- From Antoine de Courtin, and his Treatise on Civility, we learn that: ***"When it be your fortune … to be placed next to a person of quality it is ungraceful to fly out into any rapture or extravagant acclamation at every passage that pleases you: you must give him leave to judge first, by attending his approbation. For though many times you may have reason enough, and it may show your capacity, yet it will be a greater evidence of your want of breeding and respect. It is the best way therefore to forbear till that person of quality applauds of condemns it, and then you may fall in as you see occasion".***
- The opera was spectacle: social, aesthetic, and aristocratic, and you had to fall in with the fashions, and await the aristos to know how you felt about what you were witnessing. It was profoundly NOT a place to be seen to be a listener.

So, what could you do as a composer to try and make people listen? You had to be extreme. Marin Marais managed it for about a minute and a half in his opera Alcione, with this depiction of a storm… music that makes the orchestra thunder-makers and renderers of cataclysm and earthquake… all that percussion, those tempestuous runs flurries in the strings:

- The point about this piece is that it would have made the audience sit up and take notice - hopefully! But that doesn't prove that it's successful on its own terms as music. Instead, this is a stunning and violent imitation of the power of nature. That was the goal of the most astonishing effects of scenery and sound and light that the Paris opera could create at the time. The goal was not to move us emotionally, or to force us to listen to the power of music - music had no power on its own terms in this context - but to impress us, sensually, to create a spectacular son-et-lumiere. That put limits on the expressive possibilities

that composers could hope to communicate, and it meant audiences who attended the opera did so not for the purposes of transports of the soul or coherent dramatic narratives, but public spectacles, shows, dances, divertissements, in which their attention could wander form the stage to the boxes and the wigs of the Duchesses, or the blond, brunettes, and the happy abbes further up the tiers, as the Chansonnier Clerambault puts it.

The Grip of Gluck

But something changed by the 1770s in Paris. A new theatre, built after the previous one burnt down - something that would continue to happen, given their wooden construction! - had boxes that turned towards the stage rather than faced each other, and in which the partitions between them actually meant you could see the singers. That had the downside that you could no longer spend the whole night in an unseen amorous clinch of one kind or another.... And the repertoire changed, too. As the social and aristocratic hierarchies of French society began to get looser, so too did the rise of a different set of priorities from the audience. And as audience became impatient and didn't wait for aristos to tell them how to feel, but had the confidence to experience their own emotions, they were crying out for new music in which to hear themselves, their own emotions and tastes, reflected. James Johnson tells the story in brilliant and thrilling detail, but it's a confluence of those changing tastes and the music of one composer in particular, that marks a seismic change in listening in Paris: the operas of Gluck.

- Here's a taste of what happened:
- Gluck: arrived in Paris with *Iphengine en Aulide* in 1774: Louis Sebastien Mercier in the *Tableau de Paris* wrote that he considered the opera ***"a place where I would be constantly indifferent and never moved. Then Gluck came, and I now know the charms of music … I have at last felt myself shedding tears as I never before have in this place of enchantment".***
- Here's another testimony: ***"One sees for the first time a musical tragedy heard with sustained attention from start to finish"*** [59]
- The *Mercure*, 1779: "***An extreme and uninterrupted attentiveness … the strongest emotions visible on every face … prolonged by enthusiasm one moment and cut short the next for fear of losing a word or a note of music: such were the signs of interest and approval".***
- [[JH Marchand, on overhearing conversations: "Do you believe, Mesdames, that the state interests itself in facilitating your little whims? One doesn't go out in public to have a tete-a-tete".]]
- James Johnson [60]: ***"The inconceivable in 1750 - that the spectators might not be a necessary part of the spectacle, that chatter and appointments need not be accepted as normal - was now conceivable".***
- And "there was a more dramatic sign that audiences were paying closer attention to the musical drama: they wept, loudly and openly".
- [Querelle des Bouffons: 'war' between Italianists and Gluckist reformers, after Nicolo Piccinni was used as Italian style vs Gluck's restraint and emphasis on clarity, classical plots, and musical simplicity: in Piccini's Alcestis, as Mlle Levasseur sang "these strains tear at my heart", a spectator said "and you've torn at my ears!" ... cue years of aesthetic pamphleteering!]
- We can hear those ideals [of restraint and emphasis on clarity, classical plots, and musical simplicity] clearly in this piece of music, a simple March of the priests from the First act of Alceste - and we know what reaction this music could produce. [SLIDE -

- *"I took care to close myself up within my box. I listened to this new work with profound attention. Soon they came to the beautiful march of the priests of Apollo in the first act. From the first measures I was seized by such a strong feeling of awe, and felt within me so intensely that religious impulse that penetrates those who attend ceremonies of a revered and august religion, that without even knowing it I fell to me knees in my box and stayed in this position, suppliant and with my hands clasped, until the end of the piece".*

The shift is from a listening culture that privileges the spectacle to one that is all about the public display of emotions, showing - by crying, loudly! - that you are profoundly affected by the power of the drama and the music, and doing so without an aristocrat showing you the way first. This is a new kind of listening in Paris and new kind of emotional life. Gluck's music is remarkably restrained to our ears today, I think - it's hard to imagine this music reducing us to genuflections of tears today - but that's a question of taste, and for another talk!

Mozart the Musical Manipulator in Paris

The lachrymose and religiose approval of Gluck marked a new stage in Listening in Paris, because it was about admitting the ability of music to move an audience as opposed only to do so as part of a multi-media spectacle. That opened the door for a new appreciation of instrumental music, and in Paris by the end of the 18th century, one of the most important series of orchestral concerts in Europe was Le Concert Spirituel, for whom Mozart wrote a symphony that we are going to perform as listeners for the first time - that I know of anyway! - according to how he actually wrote it and how it was actually received in 1778. It's all down to you!

Before we do though: instrumental music presented a problem to Parisian audiences - and to all audiences of the time. Sonatas, symphonies, concertos weren't obviously about a dramatic spectacle, they didn't tell obvious stories, they weren't about imitating the power of nature, so how could these sounds be coherent, or thrilling? What did it all mean? Or, as the writer Fontenelle put it, *"Sonate, que-me veux tu?" - "Sonata, what do you want of me?"* A correspondent to the *Mercure* in the 1770s summed it up: *"What happens when composers rely upon harmony?" (i.e. when they compose only instrumental music) "The most beautiful scenes are disfigured, tenderness is stifled, all interest is lost, the ear only is satisfied - or rather deadened - while the mind and heart are left with nothing".* Meanings and stories and dramas had to be invented for these otherwise inert harmonies; but at least Gluck proved the point that music could produce overwhelming emotion - even if that was easier to understand - then as now! - when there was a story involved.

So, we need a bit of Mozart-in-Paris pre-history before we get to the so-called Paris Symphony: because when Mozart arrived with his mother in 1778, at the age of 22 - she would die on the trip, causing what would become an irreparable rift with his father, Leopold, it was actually his third visit to the city.

- The first was in 1764, when music by the tiny Wolfgang was published for the very first time - these sonatas for piano with violin accompaniment, as they were described: his Opus 1, and his Kochel 6… [CLIP 6]
- A couple of years later, he was paraded again by his father around the aristocratic salons - and thrillingly, we have a picture of one of the occasions when he played; an obvious bit of hagiography about the infant

phenomenon and the way he improvised variations, crated instant accompaniments, and generally impressed and delighted his audiences and potential patrons, you'd have thought? Well it really isn't!... [SLIDE - The anglaise…]

- The dog is my favourite…
- Not much better in the rest of Paris, here are a couple of other contemporary depictions of concerts of instrumental music, in which the music isn't exactly centre stage…
- And that's the kind of set-up that Mozart encountered again in 1778: touting for positions, knowing his worth compared to much of the dross he heard around him - his words, not mine - and applauding and bravoing at the Concert Spirituel and then going home to bad-mouth the composers he had just heard: ***"I have this moment returned from the Concert Spirituel. Baron Grimm and I often give vent to our wrath at the music here; N.B.--when tete-a-tete, for in public we call out "Bravo! bravissimo!" and clap our hands till our fingers tingle".***
- He had to endure exactly the conditions depicted in these 'concerts': here he is at the Duchesse de Chabot, his letter of the 1st of May
- ***"The windows and doors were open, so that not only my hands, but my body and my feet were cold, and my head also began to ache … At last, to cut matters short, I played on the wretched, miserable piano. What however vexed me most of all was, that the Duchess and all the gentlemen did not cease drawing for a single moment, but coolly continued their occupation; so I was left to play to the chairs and tables, and the walls. My patience gave way under such unpropitious circumstances. I therefore began the Fischer variations, and after playing one half of them I rose … But the Duchess would not hear of my going away; so I was obliged to wait till her husband came in, who placed himself beside me and listened to me with great attention, while, as for me, I became unconscious of all cold and all headache, and, in spite of the wretched piano, played as I CAN play when I am in the right mood. Give me the best piano in Europe, and listeners who understand nothing, or don't wish to understand, and who do not sympathize with me in what I am playing, I no longer feel any pleasure".***
- Fascinating there is the pleasure that Mozart takes in being listened to "with great attention". That doesn't mean silence, by the way - but we'll get on to that!

He had several commissions from Le Concert Spirituel - among them, a Symphony. He told his father about it in the same letter in which he tells a terrible deceit - out of kindness - to his father: his mother has died, but he tells him here only that she is very unwell, preparing him for the shock to come - he thinks. And in the same missive, here's how he tells the story of what happened with his new symphony:

… I was very nervous during the rehearsal, for in my life I never heard anything go so badly… Next day I resolved not to go to the concert at all; but in the evening, the weather being fine, I made up my mind at last to go ... I prayed to God that it might go well, for all is to His greater honor and glory; and ecce, the symphony began ... just in the middle of the allegro a passage occurred which I felt sure must please, and there was a burst of applause; but as I knew at the time I wrote it what effect it was sure to produce, I brought it in once more at the close, and then rose shouts of "Da capo!" [Which must mean that the first movement was repeated, encored by the Concert Spirituel audience.]

The andante was also liked, but the last allegro still more so. Having observed that all last as well as first allegros here begin together with all the other instruments, and generally unisono, mine commenced with only two violins, piano for the first eight bars, followed instantly by a forte; the audience, as I expected, called out "Shh!" at the soft beginning, and the instant the forte was heard began to clap their hands. The moment the symphony was over I went off in my joy to the Palais Royal, where I took a good ice….

So, now's your chance! We are all going to give Mozart what he wanted and experienced then, and we're going to do it with the music he's talking about. So, let's rehearse the things we're going to need to do:

- Applause…
- Shh!
- Cheers of 'da capo' 'encore!'
- And in order to do this with the music, we've prepared these handy listening scores, which I'll talk you through, and then we will perform. That's the point - we are listener- performers, and we always should be! Let's start with the last movement. [SLIDE]
- *[talk through - play the example… slow version first* [CLIP 7] *'that was rehearsal tempo' - 'now for the real thing!'* [CLIP 8] *faster example!] Bravo!]* That's how this music ought to go whenever it's played in concert halls! The revolution starts here...
- The point about this is that Mozart is manipulating the expectations of his Parisian public with exquisite timing; the way he writes-in extra delays to that second quiet passage, when we shushed for the second time, did you feel it? And even more than that: the syncopations in the violin lines, you can see them here [SLIDE - score] mean that we're wrong-footed by the loud, forte when it comes in - it seems to be in the wrong place; we only work it out afterwards. James Johnson describes this this piece as "a dialogue" with his listeners. Which it surely is: but it's more like a dance, in its multi-dimensional give-and-take.
- And it's noisy: Mozart knew his trick had worked because of their - and our! - applause. In fact, Le Gros, the mastermind of the Concert Spirituel, felt the andante, the slow movement, hadn't gone down well enough, because it was less applauded, so he asked Mozart to write another one. Which he did. Not a question of pragmatism, a question of wanting to appeal to his audience and his patrons.
- So, imagine Mozart sitting in a performance of his Paris Symphony at any of our concert halls today. He would walk out for an ice - or something rather stronger - I think, after he heard the dismal lack of applause after the first movement, not to say the first chord, the coup d'archet - which means all the instruments playing loudly together, something they regarded as a big deal in Paris, and whose simplicity Mozart takes the mickey out of in another letter; because he would think that we weren't having a good time. If we weren't reacting as we have done now, he knew he would have failed as a composer.
- I would say our un-enjoyable silent listening is a betrayal of this music, of what it is: it's certainly a failure to have a good time - or to fully enjoy being played with by Mozart, which is what this music is doing. We are letting the music down - and we are failing to realise a key component of what this musical event actually is!
- On to the First movement… Remember our cue? I want to do something else here too; a bit of listening improv. I want us to applaud the opening chord of the First movement, because we're loving its unison power, and then to shush! each other to hear the quiet music, and then we'll get to the place we know the Parisians applauded. Think we can do this without a rehearsal?...

- On to the tune he wrote that he "felt sure must please": it's this place - so we'll recognise when it comes in, won't we? And then we can applaud the piece - and ourselves at the end of the extract!

Give yourselves some bravos. Liberating, isn't it? It's like being given license to listen properly and to respond with our bodies as well as our brains! I hope… Mind you, it's possible that Mozart is having a laugh with us as well: these tunes are so mind-meltingly simple, they're just loud scales and arpeggios, they're not pushing the compositional envelope, but fulfilling and then, in the last movement, subverting the conventions so exquisitely - he knew what he was doing, both with us, and at our expense…

Beethoven - and Rossini - in Paris

- A quick diversion before we hear from our string quartet - and before we listen, just as noisily as we have to Mozart, to them! - to show what happens later to listening in Paris, after Beethoven's music conquers the city in 1828, a year after his death. We're in the throes of romanticism now, when the subjectivity of listening and emotional experience has begun to triumph in concert halls - and, weirdly, along with that individual emotionating, there is the rise of collective etiquettery; of showing off one's immersion in the music to demonstrate, in public, the betterment of one's soul. As the inner emotions are exercised, so are the external noises gradually silenced by bourgeois conventionality. Here are listeners to Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, in Eugene Lami's painting…
- Here are the new dilettanti of the opera house: super-fans, basically, entranced by the pure musical acrobatics of Rossini at the Theatre Italian… the lion-pit is what that engraving is called!
- ... and here Daumier's depiction of a victim of politesse! We've all been in that position, even if it's mobile phones and chewing gum wrappers today...
- And that's the interior of the Theatre Italian in the 1820: attention now squarely focused on the performers; the dress of the audience more restrained, more conventional, sightlines in boxes that prioritise the stage and not the hidden enclosure of other possibilities…
- [[Is there time to tell you about these Elephants and their place in the musical Revolution?... - if so, will do!]]

The Listening Laboratory: the string quartet in early 19th century Vienna. And right here, right now!

- I want you to use your listening prowess and all of those range of responses when we hear these musicians!
- Let's hear them - if you know the tune, give them a round of applause, cheer, whoop, whatever comes most naturally!
- *Mozart Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*: entertainment, we should clap!

And our setting now, far from the Paris opera, post-Revolution and post-Congress of Vienna, well, Vienna, in the 1820s. And our wonderful quartet here are, in part, representing the Schuppanzigh Quartet, and we're going to reveal some perhaps not so crazy facts about the listening cultures of that time and place and genre.

- "Nothing more restful than chamber music", as Luciano Berio quotes from Samuel Beckett in his *Sinfonia*. That's the image of chamber music - and the string quartet - of heightened concentration, of maximal

focus on the music, first, on the discourse between these four players, and the intricate compositional and performative feats they create.

- If there is a genre that defines an idea of silent, reverential listening, it's the quartet: high seriousness, high stakes, total concentration and no room for chatter, acclamation, or anything apart from total quietness from us lot.
- Well, that's not true: here are a couple of accounts of listening to string quartets - and Beethoven's late string quartets at that, which have a sacred reputation as the string quartet's holies of holies.
- Here's the second violinist of Beethoven's favourite string quartet, led by Ignaz Schuppanzigh, after the 1825 premiere performance of Beethoven's Op 132 quartet:
- Karl Holz:
  "It was infinitely full, and the trio as well as the quartet in particular were very much applauded; it also went together very well and Linke played better than ever. It was too crowded to hear much; but this much I did hear, that many passages were accompanied by exclamations, and upon leaving many people spoke of the beauty of the new quartet. For this reason Schuppanzigh wants to play it again in 14 days".
- And from the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, 1824:
  "The lively participation which Schuppanzigh's Quartet performances evoked this past winter determined him to reopen a cycle of quartets, and to invite the admirer of classic music to it." In 1823, the same newspaper has the same idea of participation: ***"these singular performances of chamber music, rare of their kind ... excited the participation of all connoisseurs."*** [From Nancy November, *Cultivating String Quartets in Beethoven's Vienna*: 190.]

So, what do we learn? That there was applause between movements, that movements were repeated, encored by us in the audience, and that as the music progressed, there were all kinds of vocal "exclamations"; that the room - a small-ish salon rather than anything approaching a bespoke concert hall - for the Op 132 performance was so full - and so full of noise, it's implied by Holz - that he couldn't hear much! And that proof of the quality of the piece and its performance was the chat afterwards. That goes for the newspaper too: that word, "participation": the audience participated in the creation of these performances, even, these works - that's the response they were designed to stimulate. And silence, while an option, wasn't what either report deems necessary or proof of proper attention: noise-made participation is the order of the day.

Even for string quartets! This isn't what Wigmore Hall wants of its audiences today, by the way… Another piece of evidence, a Moeser Quartet concert in Berlin in 1823:

- ***"When, in addition, there is without doubt a really lively interaction between the artists and their listeners, we can even consider the public for Möser's quartet itself as participant in its performances, particularly as this audience normally consists of the most educated and sensitive people, who have a rewarding and stimulating influence on the virtuosi."***

A lively interaction - and that word 'participant' again - the audience making the music happen… tell that to the Wigmore Hall, or indeed to most concert halls! Let's let the players off the leash, and let's applaud them: before we hear them - and when they play something you know!

- We'll get on to Beethoven, but let's go back to a composer who plays with us, all the time, and to whom we need to have a range of reactions available: those gasps, cries, tears, shocks, murmurs, and laughs.
- Haydn: Op 20/2:
- First movement: Cello solo
- First movement coda: Comedy quiet ending
- Slow movement: Tears/Awe
- Finale: Dazzle of applause

We're going forward a few decades to Beethoven's Op 131, from 1826::: another piece premiered by the Schuppanzigh Quartet, and music that seems to demand something new from its listeners and performers: each of the 7 movements runs into one another - no room for applause between them or, as Holz said to Beethoven: *"Does it have to be played through without stopping? But then we will not be able to repeat anything! When are we supposed to tune?"* Holz's concerns for the conventions being broken are about audience participation - our ability to have movements repeated - as much as the impracticality for him and his colleagues to tune! Here's how the first movement melts into the second:

… just an astonishing move up a semitone from C sharp minor to D major… when they play it again - you should gasp! Beethoven doesn't want or expect silence, just because he doesn't let us applaud between the movements - he doesn't want "detached or disembodied contemplation", as Nancy November puts it.

Hector Berlioz certainly wasn't detached when he first heard it played by the Baillot Quartet in Paris in 1829:

"After a few bars of the first movement, I began to fear that I'd be bored, without, however, allowing my concentration to lose its intensity. Quite soon this disorder seemed to resolve itself; just when the patience of the mass of the public was running out, mine was aroused and the composer's genius became accessible. Imperceptibly, it strengthened; I felt an unfamiliar tremble in my circulation, my arterial pulsation accelerated, and from the second movement, which follows the first without a break, frozen with astonishment, I turned to one of my neighbours and saw his face was pale, and sweating; the others were still as statues. Bit by bit, a heavy weight seemed to press on my breast as in a horrible nightmare, I felt my hair tingling, my teeth chattering, all my muscles contracting and finally, in a part of the finale, given extreme force by Baillot's energetic bowing, I shed cold tears, tears of anguish and terror, fell from my eyes and marked the climax of this cruel emotion".

Berlioz's "tears of anguish and terror" are pure romantic subjectivity, and they have become a paradigm of the kind of intensity we want and demand from our experience of classical music. But his wasn't a silent approbation: his entire body is involved in this tumultuous listening; his muscles go into spasm, his cold sweat, that heavy weight pressing on his chest: his is a noisy listening!

The lab in action:

Quartet to play a complete movement, with our spontaneous interactions!

[which is what we're going to experience now, as the quartet play Haydn's Op 77/1 in G major, the first movement, in full, and I want us to give full rein to our noisy emotions!]

We need more of this: our listening needs to be noisier, and more respectful to our place in the creative process, and to the musicians': we are needed to be much more than passive listening freight carted in and out of concert halls; to make these pieces of music, to make this repertoire - from Lully to Gluck, to Haydn, to Mozart, to Beethoven, to Berlioz - and all the rest - and even, to save the thing called 'classical music' - we need to make some noise!

Clips:

Clip 1 - News, in tune 6pm, 22-10-18

Clip 2 - Adagietto of Mahler 5 (opening)

Clip 3 - Lully Te Deum (Sinfonia, opening)

Clip 4 - Marais - Le Tempete from Alcione (opening)

Clip 5 - Gluck, Alceste, March of the Priests from Act 1 (opening of the track)

Clip 6 - Mozart K6 - opening

Clip 7 - Mozart K297 - opening of third movement (needs to cut off in slower Boehm version)

Clip 8 - Mozart K297 - opening of third movement in Fischer/Danish Chamber orchestra

Clip 9 - Mozart K297, First movement (for opening)
Clip 10 - Mozart K297 - first movement, just the tune!

Clip 11 - Mozart K297 - first movement, from 1'56" - 2'49" in Fischer/Danish Chamber Orch