



# The Virtual Haydn: Paradox of a Twenty-First-Century Keyboardist

*Tom Beghin*



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Haydn's music has been performed continuously for more than two hundred years. But what do we play, and what do we listen to, when it comes to Haydn? Can we still appreciate the rich rhetorical nuances of this music, which from its earliest days was meant to be played by professionals and amateurs alike?

With *The Virtual Haydn*, Tom Beghin—himself a professional keyboard player—delves deeply into eighteenth-century history and musicology to help us hear a properly complex Haydn. Unusually for a scholarly work, the book is presented in the first person, as Beghin takes us on what is clearly a very personal journey into the past. When a discussion of a group of Viennese sonatas, for example, leads him into an analysis of the contemporary interest in physiognomy, Beghin applies what he learns about the role of facial expressions during his own performance of the music. Elsewhere, he analyzes gesture and gender, changes in keyboard technology, and the role of amateurs in eighteenth-century musical culture.

The resulting book is itself a fascinating, bravura performance, one that partakes of eighteenth-century idiosyncrasy while drawing on a panoply of twenty-first-century knowledge.



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