

BBC: Hungary for more Haydn

The Early Music Show has joined the BBC Haydn party, and is heading for the palace at Esterháza to get inside the life of a 'bird in a gilded cage'.

Presenter Lucie Skeaping speaks to Richard Fawkes

Eyebrows might well be raised. Haydn an early music composer? Isn't he a little, well, late? 'He is a bit late for me,' admits Radio 3's *Early Music Show* presenter Lucie Skeaping, 'but when my producer said we were going to Esterházy Palace for the *Early Music Show*'s contribution to the Haydn season, I jumped at the opportunity. Who doesn't like a trip around a foreign stately home?'

And so Skeaping, dubbed 'the bawdy babe of Radio 3' by the *Daily Telegraph*, is presenting a two-part *Early Music Show* on Haydn's life and work at Esterháza on 27 and 28 June.

'Like many people,' she continues, 'I knew a bit about Haydn but I hadn't quite clocked that he lived in that one place for 30-odd years, a bit like a bird in a gilded cage. He was a prisoner in a moral kind of a way. Every time he tried to leave, the prince tried to dissuade him. He then felt bad about it and thought maybe he

ought to stay because it was an opportunity to be creative in a way he might not get in the outside world. I was also very saddened to learn about his bad marriage. He was a very religious man and you get the feeling he would have loved to have had children.'

Skeaping will be trying to give listeners a sense of the place and of what it must have been like for Haydn living there. 'Around the side of the palace is the building in which the staff lived, not the lower staff but the cooks and the musicians. Even at that late stage, musicians were not the great tortured virtuoso geniuses of the concert hall they became; they were musicians in service, doing a job, churning out an opera a week or a cantata or whatever was required. Every morning Haydn and the prince would discuss what the entertainments for the day were going to be. Musicians working in stately homes do seem to have been like Butlins red coats, organising the daily entertainment.'

Skeaping will also be introducing us to two obscure instruments: the baryton and the lira organizzata. The lira organizzata, played on the programme and lovingly reconstructed by a craftsman in Vienna using drawings and descriptions, would appear to be the first to have been made for a couple of hundred years. It looks, says Skeaping 'like a hurdy-gurdy that has had its way with a chamber organ. It is a fantastic one-man band.' It was certainly an instrument that appealed to the King of Naples, a man not noted for his love of music, who nevertheless

Listen out for...

20 June R3 From the Royal Opera House, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, with Sarah Connolly and Lucas Meachem in the title roles, and Handel's *Acis and Galatea* starring Danielle de Niese, Ji-Min Park, and Charles Workman. Christopher Hogwood conducts The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

22 June Sky Arts 2 *Birth of a Performance*, a behind-the-scenes look at rehearsals for Rossini's *Barber of Seville* at the Zurich Opera House. With Vesselina Kasarova

23 June R3 coverage of this year's Aldeburgh Festival begins with the first of two Britten song cycles. The first is given by Andrew Tortoise, Benjamin Hulett, Allan Clayton, Jennifer Johnston, Caryl Hughes; the second, on 30 June, by Lukas Kargl, Katherine Broderick, Ben Johnson and Nicky Spence. Malcolm Martineau is at the piano for both

Sky Arts 2 Another chance to see *O Fortuna!*, Tony Palmer's powerful film about Carl Orff and the writing of *Carmina Burana*

24 June R3 From Aldeburgh, the BBCSO performs a programme of music by Birtwistle, Debussy, Ravel and George Benjamin that also includes the UK premiere of a new piece by Julian Anderson. Benjamin conducts

25 June R3 From Aldeburgh Thomas Adès, Steven Isserlis and Anthony Marwood (violin) play Fauré, Janáček, Ravel and the world premiere of Adès's *Lieux Retrouvés*

30 June R3 The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performs Haydn's *Nelson Mass* with Claire Booth, Hilary Summers, Andrew Kennedy and Graham Broadbent as soloists; Andris Nelsons conducts

31 June R3 The complete Haydn piano sonatas are on around 9am in *Breakfast*, one sonata a day until 19 July

1 July Sky Arts 2 A remarkable *Ring* cycle from Valencia, staged by Carlos Padrissa and his theatre group La Fura dels Baus, begins with *Das Rheingold*

3 July Sky Arts 2 The New York Philharmonic in Pyongyang

commissioned Haydn to produce some music for him. The result was three concertos with which the king was so delighted he commissioned a set of eight nocturnes and invited Haydn to Naples, all expenses paid. 'But again Haydn said no.'

The other unusual instrument is the baryton, a stringed instrument similar to a viola da gamba. 'Prince Esterhazy loved the instrument so Haydn, never having played one before, went off to learn it. Some time later he came in to show the prince his new skill and the prince just said "Big deal, you ought to be able to play it better than me, that's your job." Haydn went away with his tail between his legs.' That didn't stop him writing some 126 baryton trios.

Giving listeners a sense of place: Lucie Skeaping

