

To what extent is 'The Joke' an appropriate title for Op.33 No.2. and how does Haydn create variety in the work?

Haydn's Op.33 No.2 does fit its assigned nickname of "The Joke" due to its humorous and light-hearted nature, Haydn furthers this idea by creating a sense of variety in the work.

For instance Haydn uses the rondo form to create variety (sometimes to an extreme degree) with its various sections, exemplified by the most original section of the bunch, E (at bar 149) – which is almost completely discernible from the rest of the piece. Furthermore, Haydn even plays around with the rondo form via repeating sections - such as B and A sections from bar 9 - and including previous sections that aren't A, such as B₂ in bar 80. This would play with the audience's expectations, adding variety as well as making the piece humorous to contemporaries in its unorthodox structural approach, earning the title of 'The Joke'.

Not only is the piece structurally creative, however, it also maintains the rhythmic interest of the listener with unexpected change. In the previously mentioned E section, Haydn rewrites the piece's rhythmic foundation – changing the piece's tempo to a much slower Adagio and its time signature from 6/8 to 2/4, completely and surprisingly changing the feel of the piece, creating variety and also humouring contemporaries with a deviation from the usual, expected early classical narrative. Haydn later on (from 155) also uses bars of general pauses to add an air of tension and change to the piece – once again rewriting the traditional story of the piece's rhythm with unconventional pauses to heighten the awareness of the listener to its jovial nature (hence once more showing 'The Joke' is an appropriate title).

Dynamically, within the mentioned E section, Haydn varies from loud to soft quickly with a forte-piano idea. This would, like the section itself, play with the audience's expectations even more – comedically creating a question and answer (or set up and punchline) within the melody and also establishing the E section further as the comedic climax of the piece. The dynamics also vary massively, adding a sense of variety to the piece.

Texturally, Haydn mainly sticks to the default melody-based homophony of most contemporary music, but he does add in a few flourishes. Take for example the homophony in bar 68, which adds a sense of unity within the piece when moving back to the 3rd A section (ignoring repeats) after a lengthy C section – this unity, as well as adding variety, could be argued as establishing the A section as a motif punchline, like something a stand-up comic would use, via adding a sense of grandiose into the transition to the section, making the piece even more humorous. It could be argued Haydn also creates even more variety from bar 111 to 116, using polyphony by sharing a melodic phrase between parts.

Tying into the homophony I just mentioned, Haydn uses a chromatic run in the melody within those bars to create a comedic sort of dissonance within the piece as well as a change from the usual diatonic melody of the piece, adding variety. This joins some of the many creative things Haydn uses melodically to entertain the listener, such as his use of anacrusis throughout the piece's sections of melodies – once again calling on a humorous motivic idea and adding a sense of unease by not starting on an accented beat of the bar. Haydn even calls upon his folk roots, using grace notes (as well as the folk-esque 6/8 time signature) to accentuate a comedic parody to the audience (making the piece funny) as well as draw a variety within the music from other similar composers.

Haydn also plays with tonality to create variety, flirting with keys such as A^b major in bars 37 to 47 with the addition of a D^b and B^b major from bars 128 to 135 by naturalising the A^b to A natural which creates a tense unease in the piece.

However, Haydn really uses variety to the word's essence harmonically, taking a creative route – sometimes deviating from the functional harmony embedded within classical music's roots. Take in bar 27, where Haydn uses an uncharacteristic Bb dominant 7th – to past audience's ears this would be pleonastic with the 7th's dissonant tone over the sweet innocence of a Bb major triad – adding harmonic variety as well an urge for the piece to resolve to the oncoming Eb major chord in the A section's return (once more solidifying the comedic motif appearance of the section). He also refuses to resolve the piece with the textbook perfect cadence, instead opting for a strange interrupted cadence in bar 172 (from Eb major to... Eb major) this would be funny to contemporaries who were familiar with classical music after the piece's whimper of an ending in contrast to classical music's usual noble 5-1, this is furthered by the 3 bar eternity of a general pause which allows enough time for the audience to be lulled into a false sense of security of applause before being interrupted.

Therefore, Haydn clearly uses musical elements to create variety within the piece as well as humour earning the piece its title of 'The Joke'

Outstanding . Well structured, appropriately balanced with plenty of examples and bar numbers.

NS:

As E-T essay. Once you've established the core of the essay you would probably move onto comparing it to other works - other string quartets by Haydn or perhaps those by his contemporaries - Mozart and Beethoven.