



On **Sunday, December 10, at 3:00 pm**, in the Great Hall, University of Newcastle, the choir will present its major concert in our 40th Anniversary year, *The Creation* by Joseph Haydn. Tickets can be obtained by calling 0425231625, from www.Trybooking.com, or from MacLean's Booksellers, Hamilton or The Games Shop, Charlestown Square.

Based on the book of Genesis from the *Bible*, the Oratorio tells the story of God's creation of the world and all its living beings in six days. Three soloists, representing three angels, Raphael (baritone David Grecco), Uriel (tenor Paul McMahon), and Gabriel (soprano Miriam Allan) describe the achievements for each day. Toward the end of the work, the soprano and baritone soloists represent Adam and Eve in a series of duets.

The Choir supports the overall structure and atmosphere of the work, telling part of the story, but also praising God and his accomplishments in several choruses. Miriam and Paul are well-known to Newcastle audiences, and have sung with the choir several times in the past. Miriam Allan is the daughter of Choir Director Christopher Allan, under whose baton the choir and soloists will bring the oratorio to life. They will paint a musical picture of how the world was formed.



Franz Joseph Haydn was born in Rohrau, Austria in 1732 and died in 1809 in Vienna. He became one of the most prolific and important classical composers in the High Baroque period in Europe. Haydn was mainly under contract with the wealthy Esterházy family, as Kapellmeister (chorus conductor and musical composition), during most of his career. He also wrote a number of operas, and a wide range of music for specific instruments, such as the little known baryton (similar to a bass viol). He wrote 106 symphonies, setting the standard and musical approach for contemporary and future classical composers.

W.A. Mozart was contemporary composer, and good friend. Haydn occasionally travelled to Vienna to see him, and they wrote string quartets together. There was considerable mutual admiration.

By 1790, Haydn was writing music for various patrons and publishers, but had never written a full length Oratorio. He and was invited to England by Johann Peter Salomon, an influential German violinist, to conduct large orchestras and to write further symphonies. Here he was introduced to English choral tradition, especially the works of G.F. Handel (*Messiah, Israel and Egypt*).

Haydn was deeply affected by the grandeur of this approach to music. He was also very impressed by the size of and impact on audiences. He immediately planned to compose a work of a similar nature, and chose the beginning of the *Bible*, the story of the creation of the earth and heavens by God, as his core focus.

Since the idea for this came from his experiences in England, he asked for a libretto in English with which he could compose the music. This came from Peter Salomon, and was later translated into German by Gottfried Baron von Swieten (in 1795). The text provided was originally far too long. Haydn worked closely with von Swieten to create a version acceptable for choral and solo singing.

Joseph Haydn's new oratorio, *The Creation*, first was performed in Vienna in 1798, for an invited audience of Viennese nobility. He received 500 ducats as payment, a sum equal to half his annual salary as Esterhàzy choirmaster. Unlike Mozart, who at times struggled for income from his music, Haydn was financially secure.

Haydn published the first score of *The Creation* in 1800 at his own expense. He specified both English and German texts.

Over the next three centuries, the work has been performed by choirs all over the world. *The Creation* is one of the most popular oratorios ever written.

The most well-known of all the choruses in *The Creation* is 'The Heavens are Telling the Glory of God', which is sung at the end of Part 1, after the light illuminating the heavens and the earth is forged. But the oratorio begins with God's plan to produce the light, from the void and darkness of chaos. Here, in a stunning C-major chord, the chorus sings "Let there be light", setting the basis for the story and the rest of the work.

The soloists then introduce the created components: water, grass, whales and other creatures, and finally the humans, Adam and Eve. At the end of Part 2, chorus and soloists combine to sing "Achieved is the Glorious Work", summarising and praising all the achievements after the sixth day of the Creation. Part 3 is devoted to Adam and Eve, and reflections on the whole process. The final chorus, "Sing the Lord Ye Voices All" creates a spectacular ending to one of the best-loved oratorios in the choral repertoire.

Howard Bridgman, Editor

**Newcastle University Choir
Concerts for 2018 (dates to be confirmed)**

May – *Carmina Burana* (with Echology, the University Chamber Choir)

August – *St Nicholas* (Britten) and *Requiem* (Fauré) Combined choir performance at the Newcastle Music Festival

December – Annual Christmas Concert