

# CHORUSPONDENCE

March 2009

Barbara Frederick, editor

## HAYDN'S CREATION IS APRIL 18, 2009

### COMPOSTION

Haydn was inspired to write a large oratorio during his visits to England in 1791–1792 and 1794–1795, when he heard oratorios of Handel performed by large forces. Israel in Egypt is believed to have been one of these. It is likely that Haydn wanted to try to achieve results of comparable weight, using the musical language of the mature classical style.

The work on the oratorio lasted from October 1796 to April 1798. It was also a profound act of faith for this deeply religious man, who appended the

words "Praise to God" at the end of every completed composition. He later remarked, "I was never so devout as when I was at work on *The Creation*; I fell on my knees each day and begged God to give me the strength to finish the work." Haydn composed much of the work while at his residence in the Mariahilf suburb of Vienna, which is now the Haydnhaus. It was the longest time he had ever spent on a single composition. Explaining this, he wrote, "I spent much time over it because I expect it to last for a long time." In fact, he worked on the



*Franz Haydn*

project to the point of exhaustion, and collapsed into a period of illness after conducting its premiere performance.

Haydn's original autograph score has been lost since 1803. A Viennese-published score dated 1800 forms the

*Continued on page 3*

### NEW 2009 BOARD MEMBERS.

Lisa Lucks Mendel

New Board members are:

Jan Carnall, Soprano

Jackie White, Alto

Anita Hester, Alto

Re-elected are:

Steve Alsobrook, Bass

Bruce Donley, Bass

Lewis Wright, Bass

**Alternates** are Rae Clark and Brian Lee

Thanks goes to **outgoing**

board members, Tina Dawn Womack and Barbara Frederick.

**THANKS TO ALL BOARD MEMBERS!!!**



## **PROTECTING YOUR VOICE!!! DID YOU KNOW?**

Have you ever breathed the smoke that curls up from the tip of someone else's cigarette? Or the smoke exhaled by a smoker? If so, then you have breathed most of the same harmful, cancer-causing parts of smoke inhaled by smokers. As a nonsmoker breathing the smoke from others, you are at risk for the same illnesses as smokers.

If you are around others who smoke, you are at risk. Ventilation (airing out a room or opening a window) does not eliminate the health problems of secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke is classified as a "Group A" cancer-causing agent.

And then there are allergies! Common allergens in the air are pollen, mold, animal dander and dust. Making allergies feel worse are aerosol sprays, cold temperatures, humidity, irritating fumes,

tobacco smoke and wind.

Some new antihistamines that are less likely to cause tiredness or dry mouth are astemizole (Hismanal), loratadine (Claritin) and terfenadine (Seldane). Claritin no longer requires a prescription and can be purchased at a discount at Walgreen's as Walitin. Other remedies include decongestants, inhaled steroids, Cromolyn (Nasalcrom) or allergy shots or immunotherapy. These shots are given on a regular schedule so that your body gets used to the allergens and no longer overreacts to them. It takes months to years to finish treatment and you may need to have treatment throughout your life. But.....it works!

What about colds? Be sure to wash your hands often and avoid touching your face, eat a balanced diet, keep your stress level down. Don't treat your cold with antibiotics, don't smoke. Drink liquids and rest!

vu sur YATAHONGA.com



## **PERFORMING THE CREATION AT THE CANNON CENTER**

To park at the Cannon Center, enter the lot of the Convention Center from Front Street. The parking attendant will have a list of all singers for all rehearsals and the performance.

Women should wear black dresses with only pearl accessories—necklace and earrings, but NO dangles—studs only.

*All you really need to remember is diction, rhythm, harmony, vocal tone, pitch, the conductor, your appearance, composer instructions, and what page you're on!*

Men should wear black tuxedos—no red accessories.

Please don't wear any perfume or aftershave—people with asthma and allergies really suffer while trying to sing in a scent-infested environment. Please consider personal hygiene carefully.

Use only black folders during the performance and turn off cell phones and

paggers.

Remember to turn pages quietly—paper clip them in advance.

If you need a cough drop, please unwrap it BEFORE the concert begins.

Follow the direction of the concertmaster when standing and sitting.

Do not EVER talk to your neighbor while on stage or wave to friends and family in the audience.

**WATCH THE CONDUCTOR!!!**

## **AN IMPORTANT BIRTHDAY!**

Since I'm the editor, I can write about whatever I want to. It's very important to me that you know that it's Barbie's birthday this year!

Yes, the bathing beauty is 50 years old and Mattel has gone crazy marketing our beautiful role model. (?)

(I don't want to look like her, but I would like to dress like her!)

There was a real, human person Barbie fashion show in New York City during Fashion Week. Designers like Bob Mackie and Betsey Johnson designed real-people sized Barbie clothes. Mattel is offering a 50-year anniversary Barbie this year and re-issues of past dolls. Yes, Barbie can do anything! In my world, she can sing!



basis of most performances today. The 'most authentic' *Tonkünstler-Societat* score of 1799, with notes in the composer's hand, can be found at the [Vienna](#) State Library. There are various other copyist scores such as the *Estate*, as well as hybrid editions prepared by scholars during the last two centuries.

## THE STORY OF THE LIBRETTO

The text of *The Creation* has a long history. The three sources are Genesis, the Biblical book of [Psalms](#), and [John Milton's](#) Genesis epic [Paradise Lost](#). In 1795, when Haydn was leaving England, the impresario Johann Peter Salomon (1745–1815) who had arranged his concerts there handed him a new poem entitled *The Creation of the World*. This original had been offered to Handel, but the old master had not worked on it, as its wordiness meant that it would have been 4 hours in length when set to music. The [libretto](#) was probably passed on to Salomon by Thomas Linley Sr. (1733–1795), a Drury Lane oratorio concert director. Linley (sometimes called Lidley or Liddel) himself could have written this original English libretto, but scholarship by Edward Olleson, A. Peter Brown (who prepared a particularly fine "authentic" score) and H. C. Robbins Landon, tells us that the original writer remains anonymous.

When Haydn returned to Vienna, he turned this libretto over to [Baron van Swieten](#). The Baron led a multifaceted career as a diplomat, librarian in charge of the imperial library, amateur musician, and generous patron of music and the arts. He is largely responsible for recasting the English libretto of *The Creation* in a German translation (*Die Schöpfung*) that Haydn could use to compose. He also made suggestions to Haydn regarding the setting of individual numbers. The work was published bilingually (1800) and is still performed in both languages today. Haydn himself preferred for the English translation to be used when the work was performed for English-speaking audiences.

Van Swieten was evidently not a fully fluent speaker of [English](#), and the metrically-matched English version of the libretto has given rise to criticism and various attempts at improvement. Indeed, the English version is sufficiently awkward that the work is sometimes performed in [German](#) even in English-speaking countries. One passage describing the freshly-minted Adam's forehead ended up, "The large and arched front sublime/of wisdom deep declares the seat".

## PREMIERE

The first performances in 1798 were sponsored by a group of noble citizens, who paid the composer handsomely for the right to stage the premiere (Salomon briefly threatened to sue, on grounds that the English libretto had been translated illegally). The performance was delayed until late April - the parts were not finished until Good Friday - but the completed work was rehearsed before a full audience on April 29.

The first public performance the next day was a private affair, but hundreds of people crowded into the street around the Schwarzenberg Palace to hear this eagerly anticipated work. Admission was by invitation only. Those invited included wealthy patrons of the arts, high government officials, prominent composers and musicians, and a sprinkling of the nobility of several countries; the common folk, who would have to wait for later occasions to hear the new work, so crowded the streets near the palace that some 30 special police were needed to keep order. Many of those lucky enough to be inside wrote glowing accounts of the piece. In a letter to the *Neue teutsche Merkur*, one audience member wrote: "Already three days have passed since that happy evening, and it still sounds in my ears and heart, and my breast is constricted by many emotions even thinking of it."

The first public performance at Vienna's Burgtheater on 19 March 1799 was sold out far in advance, and *Die Schöpfung* was performed nearly forty more times in the city during Haydn's lifetime. It had its London premiere the next year, in an English translation, at the Covent Garden Theatre. The last performance Haydn attended was on March 27 1808, just a year before he died: the aged and ill Haydn was carried in with great honour on an armchair. According to one account, the audience broke into spontaneous applause at the coming of "light" and "Papa" Haydn, in a typical gesture weakly pointed upwards and said: "Not from me - everything comes from up there!"

Remarkably, *The Creation* was also performed more than forty times outside Vienna during his lifetime: elsewhere in Austria and Germany, throughout England, and in Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Russia and the United States.

# MUSICAL FORCES

*The Creation* is set for three vocal soloists (soprano, tenor, and bass), four-part chorus (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), and a large Classical orchestra consisting of 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and the usual string sections of first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses. For the recitatives a harpichord or fortepiano is also used.

There seems little doubt that Haydn wanted a big sound (by the standard of his day) for his work. Between the private premieres for nobles and the public premiere in 1799, Haydn added extra instrumental parts to the work. The forces for the public premiere numbered about 120 instrumentalists and 60 singers.

The three soloists represent angels who narrate and comment on the successive six days of creation: Gabriel (soprano), Uriel (tenor), and Raphael (bass). In Part III, the role of Adam is usually sung by the same soloist as sings Raphael, and the roles of Gabriel and Eve are also taken by the same singer (this was the practice Haydn followed); however, some conductors prefer to cast each of the five roles with a different soloist.

The choral singers are employed in a series of monumental choruses, several of them celebrating the end of one particular day of creation.

The orchestra often plays alone, notably in the episodes of "tone-painting": the appearance of the sun, the creation of various beasts, and above all in the overture, the famous depiction of the Chaos before the creation.

A typical performance lasts about one hour and 45 minutes.



**End of the Year Soiree at Larry and Shane's House**

**138 Perkins Extd**

**Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> 2:00 ñ 5:00**