

Minnesota Orchestra

Paul McCreesh, conductor

Joëlle Harvey, soprano | Robert Murray, tenor | Kevin Deas, bass-baritone
Minnesota Chorale, Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

Thursday, March 30, 2023, 11 am	Orchestra Hall
Friday, March 31, 2023, 8 pm	Orchestra Hall
Saturday, April 1, 2023, 8 pm	Orchestra Hall

Franz Joseph Haydn

The Creation
Part I
Part II

ca. 80'

I N T E R M I S S I O N

ca. 20'

Franz Joseph Haydn

The Creation
Part III

ca. 29'

The text in these performances of Haydn's *The Creation* is sung in English, in a translation of the original German text compiled and edited by Paul McCreesh. The text is provided in an insert.

The fortepiano used in this week's performances was provided by the Schubert Club.

pre-concert

Concert Preview with Valerie Little and guests
Thursday, March 30, 10:15 am, Auditorium
Friday, March 31, 7:15 pm, Target Atrium
Saturday, April 1, 7:15 pm, Target Atrium

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.





Paul McCreesh, conductor

English conductor Paul McCreesh, who is renowned for the energy and passion of his music-making, is the founder and artistic director of the Gabrieli Consort & Players, with which he won many awards and toured globally since establishing the ensemble in 1982. He has conducted major orchestras, choirs and opera companies worldwide, from the Leipzig Gewandhaus to the Teatro Real Madrid, and last visited the Minnesota Orchestra in 2001, when he led Handel's *Messiah*. Earlier this season he conducted *Messiah* with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, with which he enjoys regular collaborations; elsewhere in 2022-23 he leads the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and joins forces with Filharmonia Poznanska. McCreesh is especially enthusiastic about working with young musicians, broadening access to classical music and building new educational initiatives. He is a former principal conductor and artistic adviser of the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon and served for six seasons as artistic director of the International Festival Wroclaw Cantans in Wroclaw, Poland. In 2011, McCreesh launched his own record label, Winged Lion, building on his large catalog of recordings with Deutsche Grammophon, including a Gramophone Award-winning Haydn's *The Creation*. This week's performances of *The Creation* are sung using McCreesh's version of the English libretto. More: rayfieldallied.com.



Joëlle Harvey, soprano

American soprano Joëlle Harvey is recognized as one of the most promising talents of her generation, with her recent Royal Opera House main stage debut as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* drawing especially high critical acclaim. In addition to her Minnesota Orchestra debut with these concerts, in the 2022-23 season she returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* and to the Glyndebourne Festival for the title role in *Semele*. She also performs Mahler's Second Symphony with the Cincinnati Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the New York Philharmonic, Schubert's Mass in E-flat with the Cleveland Orchestra, Handel's *Solomon* with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchestre and Orff's *Carmina burana* with the Chicago Symphony. In past seasons Harvey made her debut as Aristeia in *L'Olimpiade* at the Zurich Opera House and appeared in concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Handel & Haydn Society, among many other major opera companies and ensembles. In 2019 she made her Carnegie Hall recital debut with pianist Allen Perriello. She has been awarded numerous honors including the Shoshana Foundation's Richard F. Gold Career Grant and a First Prize Award the Gerda Lissner Foundation. More: fletcherartists.com.



Robert Murray, tenor

English tenor Robert Murray has performed principal roles with the Royal Opera House, Hamburg State Opera and English National Opera and the Beijing Music, Edinburgh and Salzburg festivals. This season he debuts with the Teatro alla Scala Milan in Adès' *The Tempest* and with Theater an der Wien in the title role of Handel's *Belshazzar*. He also returns to English National Opera as Robert Devereaux in *Gloriana* and to Garsington Opera, and he appears in concert with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Academy of Ancient Music. Recent highlights include his debut as Florestan in *Fidelio* with the Irish National Opera, Mark in *A Midsummer Marriage* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under conductor Edward Gardner, the roles of Peter Quint and Prologue in *The Turn of the Screw* with Opera Glassworks and Garsington Opera, a staged *St. John Passion* at the Théâtre du Châtelet, the premiere of Gerald Barry's *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* at the Royal Opera House and his Bayerische Staatsoper debut in *Peter Grimes*. He has also performed in concert with the London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony and Seattle Symphony and often appears in recital. He is committed to contemporary music, having performed works by Gerald Barry and Hans Werner Henze. More: intermusica.com.



Kevin Deas, bass-baritone

Kevin Deas has gained international renown as one of America's leading bass-baritones. He is perhaps most acclaimed for his signature portrayal as Porgy in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, having performed it with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Pacific Symphony, as well as other illustrious North American orchestras and at the Ravinia, Vail and Saratoga festivals, and recently with the Des Moines Metro Opera. He has appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra twice previously: as a soloist in Handel's *Messiah* in 2009 and performing Karim Al-Zand's *The Prisoner* at an Inside the Classics program in July 2018. Highlights of his recent schedule include performances of Mozart's Requiem with the Florida Orchestra and Handel's *Messiah* with the National Cathedral, Boston Baroque and New York Philharmonic. Other notable recent performances include Nathaniel Dett's *The Ordering of Moses* with the Bach Festival Society of Winter Park, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Las Vegas Philharmonic and the Phoenix Symphony, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Portland Symphony Orchestra, and the role of Dick Hallorann in Paul Moravec's opera *The Shining* with Opera Colorado. More: dispeker.com.

Minnesota Chorale

Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

Barbara Brooks, accompanist and artistic advisor

The Minnesota Chorale, principal chorus of the Minnesota Orchestra since 2004, has sung with the Orchestra for more than four decades, most recently last November in performances and a recording of Mahler's Third Symphony under Osmo Vänskä's direction. It will collaborate with the Orchestra again in May for the world premiere of *bre(a)d*th by Carlos Simon with libretto by Marc Bamuthi Joseph. Founded in 1972 and led since 1995 by artistic director Kathy Saltzman Romey, the Chorale is Minnesota's preeminent symphonic chorus and ranks among the foremost professional choruses in the U.S. More: mnchorale.org.

soprano

Laura E. Amos
Kristi Bergland*
Anna Boeser
Penny Bonsell
Alyssa K. Breece*
Deborah Carbaugh*
Catherine Crosby-Schmidt*
Gina K. Cruciani
Monica deCausmeaker*
Deyhdra Dennis-Weiss*
Laurel E. Drevlow*
Heather Ford
Michelle Hayes*
Sarah Jennings
Juliann Kunkel
Elizabeth Longhurst*
Wendy Lukaszewski
Shana Marchand
Pamela Marentette*
Shannon McGuire*

Merilu Narum
Linda Neuman
Elizabeth Pemberton*
Sara Ann Pogorely
Kristin Schmitz
Shari M. Speer*
Amara Strande
Jennifer Sylvester*
Shekela Wanyama*
Karen R. Wasiluk

alto

Jill H. Apple
Alyssa Burdick* ^
Ruth Dalager Buuck
Becca Donley
Elisabeth M. Drost*
Susan Sacquitne Druck*
Gloria Fredkove
Nikki Darlene Frontz
Michelle Hackett
Lindsey Hartjes
Judith Harvey

Dee Hein
Heather Hood*
Laura Horner*
Suzanne L. Hotzel
Katy Husby
Suzanne Kennedy*
Cassie Noll Kopietz
Celia McCoy
Mary Monson*
Damara O'Malley*
Erica Perl*
Krista Petersen
Barbara S. Prince*
Deborah E. Richman
Joy E. Roellinger
Kristen Schweiloch
Patricia Seidl
Mary Beth Seidlitz
Elizabeth Sullivan*
Suzanne Wiebusch
Natalie Wishcop

tenor

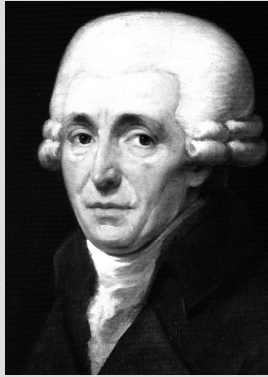
Samuel Baker*
Drew Brooks
Jared Campbell*
Patrick L. Coleman
Benjamin Cooper
Chris Crosby-Schmidt
Paolo Debuque*
Matthew Keranen
Andrew Kreye
Rich Maier
Scott D. McKenzie
Warren Moe
Kevin Navis
Jeffrey Nielsen
Mark Pladson
Jeffrey J. Raehl*
Philip Reilly
Patrick Romey*
Scott Sandberg
Luke Slivinski
Erick Sood
Mark Trease
Ty Wottrich

bass

Peder Bolstad
Connor Buechler
Scott Chamberlain
Mark Countryman
Steve Cramer*
James D'Aurora
Stefan Gingerich
David Goudzwaard-Vaught*
John R. Henrich
James Hild
Steven Hodulik*
Thomas Hollenhorst
Thomas Jermann
Evan Clay Kelly
Jon C. Lahann*
Steven W. Landby*
Bob Magil
William Marrujo
Jerry Nelson
Paul Nelson
Jon Nordstrom*
Robert Oganovic
Bob Peskin*
Nathan Petersen-Kindem*
Benjamin Shermock
Bob Simon
William B. Smale
Russ Vander Wiel
Rick Wagner*
Jacob Hurley Weindling

* Section leader
^ Soloist





Franz Joseph Haydn

Born: March 31, 1732,
Rohrau, Austria

Died: May 31, 1809,
Vienna, Austria

The Creation

Premiered: April 30, 1798 (private premiere); March 19, 1799 (public premiere)

Joseph Haydn's glorious oratorio *The Creation* is a choral-orchestral telling of one of the world's many creation stories—that of the Christian Bible and Hebrew Torah—and is especially well-chosen for the beginning of spring in our northern climate, a time of re-creation when we again witness the vibrant scents, sounds and colors of spring.

Haydn was in his mid-60s, near the end of the 18th century, when he undertook *The Creation*. He had given his all in the symphony genre that he pioneered—recently having completed the last dozen of 104—and was taken with a new idea: the notion of writing an oratorio in the tradition of George Frideric Handel. At an age when some might retire, Haydn was by no means burned out, but full of zest to confront something new—music on an extensive scale which could be addressed to a wide swath of humanity. With his time in London behind him, he took up his final residence in a Vienna suburb, where he worked on *The Creation*. He had written oratorios before, as early as the 1760s, but his encounter with Handel's *Messiah* later in life awakened his creative urge on a new level. He set out to write for the largest forces he had ever required.

the structure and libretto

Designed in the three parts characteristic of the English oratorio tradition, *The Creation* flows in a series of recitatives—declamatory passages with thinner accompaniment and minimal melodic development—followed by descriptive arias rich in pictorial content, with more elaborate melodies and harmonic progressions and a complex accompaniment by larger orchestral forces. In Parts I and II, recitatives announce each of the six days of creation, and arias culminate in a chorus of praise or thanksgiving. In contrast, Part III begins with a lengthy orchestral introduction that evokes the seventh day, the day of rest, portraying an idyllic morning in the Garden of Eden. The preface leads to an extended tableau for chorus and the blissful opera-like couple of Adam and Eve, whose solos now supplant the narrator archangels of the preceding parts.

The impresario Johann Peter Salomon, instigator of Haydn's London triumphs of the early 1790s, apparently put the libretto into the composer's hands. Compiled from Genesis and the seventh and eighth books of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, as well as from the Bible's Psalms, it partly fulfilled the advice a friend offered when Haydn sought an idea for an oratorio. "There! Take that, and begin at the beginning," the violinist François-Hippolyte Barthélemon had told him, handing him the Old Testament.

The Creation is the first known work for which a text was issued in two languages, in both English and German, but English was used for the first performances, as it is in this week's Minnesota Orchestra performances. Haydn entrusted the preparation of the English text to a worthy music lover, the former diplomat Baron van Swieten, who at the time served Austria as Imperial and Royal Librarian. This intellectual was the connoisseur who would shape the final words (which have been refined substantially for this week's performances by the conductor who will lead them, Paul McCreech).

one-minute note

Haydn: *The Creation*

Late in life, Haydn completed his massive output of symphonies and explored new creative challenges, none more ambitious than *The Creation*, which was modeled after Handel's oratorios. Expressing the view that nature is the supreme testament of God, it is assembled primarily from the Christian and Hebrew Book of Genesis and biblical Psalms, as well as Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The first two parts describe the Judeo-Christian creation story through declamatory recitatives and arias and ariosos that constitute miniature tone paintings, while the concluding third part focuses on an extended tableau for chorus and soloists that places the listener in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve in their state of innocence. Along the way we go on a musical safari through the natural world that evokes creatures ranging from whales to a growling lion to lowly insects and conjures howling winds, thunder and lightning. *The Creation's* libretto was issued in English and German, and these performance feature the English text as revised by this week's conductor Paul McCreech in a version that addresses flaws in the original and improves accessibility for English-speaking listeners.

Swieten explained that in preparing the English libretto he “followed the plan of the original [German] faithfully as a whole, but I diverged from it in details as often as musical progress and expression...seemed to demand. Guided by these sentiments, I often judged it necessary that much should be shortened or even omitted, on the one hand, and on the other that much should be made more prominent or brought into greater relief, and much placed more in the shade.”

This has left room for others such as McCreesh, centuries later, to create their own versions. (The most recent Minnesota Orchestra performance, in April 1999, used a version prepared by conductor Robert Shaw, who had been scheduled to lead those concerts but passed away earlier in the year.) In the preface to his version, McCreesh notes that in Swieten’s version “...there are many places where mistranslation, garbled grammar and syntax, and a propensity to apply German word order to English, reduce the text to nonsense. At other times the rhythmic alternations required for the English language play havoc with the rhetoric of Haydn’s music.” He adds that he “decided to give the libretto a complete and thorough revision, in the hope of creating a version which speaks directly and comfortably to English listeners, and is more worthy of Haydn’s sublime music” while still taking care to preserve the original when appropriate. He compares it to “a fascinating crossword puzzle” that obeys “the fundamental musical and rhetorical principles of English word-setting.”

early performances

Baron van Swieten did more than shape a text and look over Haydn’s shoulder as *The Creation* materialized: he also solicited 12 guarantors to pay the expenses and provide an honorarium for the composer. The first performance at the palace of Prince Schwarzenberg was private, but excitement reverberated throughout Vienna on that night of April 30, 1798. So large a crowd of curious seekers gathered outside the palace gates that a phalanx of a dozen foot patrol and 18 mounted guards were engaged to keep the entry clear. Invitations to the premiere had been issued mostly to a select guest list drawn from the Austrian, Polish and English nobility and diplomats. The writer Giuseppe Carpani, who would later prepare his own English translation of *The Creation*, left a vivid account:

“I was present, and I can assure you I never witnessed such a scene. The flower of the literary and musical society of Vienna was assembled in the room, which was well adapted to the purpose. The most profound silence, the most scrupulous attention, a sentiment, I might almost say, of religious respect prevailed when the first stroke of the bow was given.”

In his excitement, the composer himself conducted, later recalling that “One moment I was cold as ice, the next I seemed on fire. More than once I was afraid I should have a stroke.”

Like its inspiration, Handel’s *Messiah*, the new oratorio soon became a major attraction, especially after its public performance at the Burgtheater in 1799. Before Haydn’s death in 1809 it had chalked up some 40 performances, often conducted by the composer, and many dedicated to a charity benefit, just as *Messiah*—in the parlance of its time—had “fed the hungry and clothed the poor.” One of the notable performances took place in Paris on Christmas Eve 1800. Seated in the audience was Napoleon, then First Consul, who had just escaped an attempt on his life. The crowd had been buzzing with news of the near-assassination, but when they heard Haydn’s majestic music, the oratorio became their focus.

The last public concert that Haydn attended took place on March 27, 1808, an event marking his 76th birthday with a performance of *The Creation*. That night he was held aloft in an armchair as he entered the hall to a fanfare of trumpet and drums, only to be greeted by a thunderous calling of “Long live Haydn!” When the frail composer noted a slight cold draft, Princess Esterházy, of the family who had employed him as court composer for nearly 30 years, wrapped her shawl around him, and other ladies added theirs to cover him in warmth. Hearing the verses inscribed in his honor, Haydn was moved to tears.

German painter Albert Christoph Dies noted the scene, concluding with the poignant account that “...he could barely speak and could express only with intermittent, weak words and gestures his deepest thanks, and his warmest wishes for the well-being of the assembly of musicians and their art in general.” Little more than a year later the composer passed away.

the music: too much for words

Haydn’s *Creation* remains the powerful document of an artist’s convictions as well as his craft. Those who attend to the union of his music with the text—which will move the heart and sometimes elicit a smile—will understand that this oratorio is a work of its times, and that in its view nature is the supreme testament of God, if and however you may define the creator.

From start to finish, Haydn’s score is crammed with details that please the ear and delight the soul—far too much to be previewed in these pages, and, to borrow the simile of Berlioz, reminding us that music is to words as a prince is to a pauper. With its plentitude of arias and ariosos that constitute miniature tone paintings, listening to *The Creation* is like roaming the beautiful world and surveying all it displays—today, alas, so much of it endangered. As one by one the animals appear—from the great whales to the growling lion, from the lowly worm to the insect hosts (all suggested in the witty figures and appropriate orchestration Haydn had already tested in pictorial passages of his symphonies), we experience a musical safari of great



wonderment. Such numbers children too might enjoy; even in our era of sensory overload, their imaginations may be among the best in not requiring visuals.

Consider only the high drama of the beginning: in dark colors and strong harmonies, some of the boldest Haydn ever wrote, with their music that at time sounds prophetic of Richard Wagner, the composer thrusts us into the awesome state of Chaos, rooted in C minor. Upon the prospect of cosmic life, however, he asserts a less common key, particularly in orchestral music of the period, D-flat major, that sounds gentler in the context, and woodwinds present ascending figures. At the crucial moment—the first rays of light—the prelude abandons the minor mode for the life-giving radiance of C major, precisely what Richard Strauss would do a century later in *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Tonally, the end of the work is telling, for instead of coming to rest in C major, as the overall tonal progression might have indicated, the section that dwells on Adam and Eve shifts downward to B-flat, as if prophetic of their fall.

Indicative of Haydn's broader source material, the libretto brings three archangels into the story who are not mentioned in the Book of Genesis: Raphael, Gabriel and Uriel. Among the ingenious instrumental strokes are those that conjure up howling winds, thunder and lightning in Raphael's orchestrally accompanied recitative. And the feathery descent of snowflakes is equally within the scope of Haydn's tonal imagination. A powerful bass aria, "Rolling in foaming billows," captures the myriad manifestations of water, from raging seas to gliding brooks. The lyricism of Gabriel's "Now robed in cool refreshing green" is embellished with elegant coloratura. In the arioso of Uriel, the sun mounts the sky, striding through the large interval of a tenth; as the tempo slows and the volume diminishes, the moon that steals through the shadows of night is glimpsed in deep bass strings.

Besides the vivid orchestration (often spotlighting the clarinet, a relative newcomer that Mozart had established in the orchestra), you will hardly fail to note the sheer beauty of the melodies, which are on a par with Mozart, and the mighty fuguing that can only bring to mind Handel and Bach.

As for performing forces, Haydn thought big—as did Mozart for some of his symphonies. Although he conducted a scaled-down ensemble at his former place of employment, the Esterházy palace out on the Hungarian plains, which had only a few paid singers and two dozen instrumentalists available, he far preferred large forces. In fact, the historic March 1799 performance at the Burgtheater attests to an orchestra of some 120 instrumentalists, including 70-plus string players with woodwinds tripled and

divided into three groups. However, some may have played limited roles, joining in only at climactic points.

"Laus Deo!" (Praise to God!) Haydn inscribed on the final pages of his manuscripts. So too do we give praise—to a higher power or simply to nature—as his music inspires our rapturous wonder at the bounty of the universe in which we play our tiny part.

Instrumentation: solo soprano, tenor and bass with four-part mixed choir and orchestra comprising 4 flutes, 4 oboes, 4 clarinets, 4 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, harpsichord, fortepiano and strings

Program note by *Mary Ann Feldman*.



The Minnesota Orchestra, then known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, first performed **Joseph Haydn's *The Creation*** in one of the final concerts of its second season on April 14, 1905, at the Minneapolis Auditorium, with founding Music Director Emil Oberhoffer conducting. The Philharmonic Club served as the chorus while soprano Anna Bussert, tenor Edward P. Johnson and bass Joseph Baernstein were the soloists. The Orchestra has programmed *The Creation* in full only six times since: in 1929, 1951, 1972, 1980, 1999 and this week—all springtime performance save for the one in November 1951.

The performance in 1929 is noteworthy as the Orchestra's only rendition of *The Creation* that took place on a tour—at a concert held in Tulsa, Oklahoma—and the only performance of the work to feature a high school choir, from Century High School. The performances in 1972 were led by Robert Shaw, and Shaw had originally been scheduled to conduct the performances in April 1999 as well, but passed away in January of that year. Arnold Östman conducted instead, but Shaw's influence was felt throughout the performance as it employed his version of the English libretto.