

Programme Notes

Die Schöpfung

Fri 16 December 2022 · 20.15

Sun 18 December 2022 · 14.15

PROGRAMME

conductor Jan Willem de Vriend

soprano Lucy Crowe

tenor Mauro Peter

bass Christopher Purves

chorus Laurens Collegium

Joseph Haydn 1732-1809

Die Schöpfung, Hob.XXI:2
(1796-98)

Oratorio in three parts for soloists, choir, and orchestra, on a text by Gottfried van Swieten after John Milton

Intermission in the second part, after the chorus 'Der Herr ist groß in seiner Macht'

Concert ends at around 22.30

Most recent performances by our orchestra:

Apr 2011, conductor Masaaki Suzuki

One hour before the start of the concert, Marien van Staalen will give an introduction (in Dutch) to the programme, admission €5. Tickets are available at the hall, payment by debit card. The introduction is free for Vrienden.

Cover: Photo Joel Filipe

Illustrations:

The fifth day of creation (p. 3) and

The second day of creation (p. 4).

Woodcuts by Maurits Cornelis Escher (1926).

Hymn of praise to the creation

Haydn's masterpiece from his later years, *Die Schöpfung (The Creation)* is an optimistic work that combines faith, a wonder for natural beauty, and imaginative musicality.

Strictly speaking, *Die Schöpfung* is from a Roman Catholic musical tradition depicting the Biblical telling of the creation. In the first two parts three archangels describe in detail how God created the world in six days. In the third and final part we hear Adam and Eve offering effusive thanks to their Creator and expressing how they intend to live their lives in a good way.

The work, however, extends beyond its religious framework thanks to the combination of Haydn's childlike enthusiasm and mature musical genius. In his 66th year, the composer worked with such dedication that *Die Schöpfung* quickly grew into a universal hymn of praise. Ever since its premiere in 1798, most listeners, regardless of their religious beliefs, have been captivated by the mix of arias, recitatives and jubilant choruses that interplay over the course of more than one and a half hours. Despite the German libretto, *Die Schöpfung* is modelled on the English-language oratorios of Handel. Haydn came across the music of his great predecessor during the two lengthy stays in England following retirement as court musician. Although

Handel had died over thirty years previously, oratorios such as *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt* had retained their popularity amongst the music-loving British. It had become the custom to perform such oratorios with enormous orchestras and choirs. Haydn attended such a large-scale performance of *Messiah* at Westminster Abbey during the Handel Festival of 1791.

Exciting and happy

Haydn is said to have confided in his English acquaintances of his wish to compose such an oratorio himself one day. Just before his return to Vienna in 1795, he was given a libretto that told the story of the creation. The anonymous writer had woven reworked parts of Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* with the narrative from the Old Testament Book of Genesis. According to tradition, this libretto had once been presented Handel, who had never actually used it. Haydn, however, did set to work, once his Viennese friend Baron Van Swieten had translated the text into German. Haydn, at the time one of the most famous musicians in the world, understood perfectly how high the expectations were for



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Haydn left the hall, overcome by the power of his own music and by the congratulations of all those present.

this oratorio, which needed to become his magnum opus. He therefore took the time for his vision for this ambitious work to fully develop. For almost a year and a half, from the end of 1796 to early 1798, he worked almost without interruption on *Die Schöpfung*. He no doubt found it an exciting and happy period in his life. He confided to his biographer Griesinger that he had never felt so devoutly religious as during that period: 'I fell to my knees every day to pray to God for strength.'
Following the celebrated premiere of the work in Vienna, under

the baton of the composer himself, the oratorio set out on a triumphant tour through Europe. The first performance in France on 24 December 1800 might even have changed the course of history. On his way to the concert, Napoleon Bonaparte narrowly survived an attempt on his life. Another famous performance occurred on 27 March 1808 when Viennese high society paid tribute to Haydn on the occasion of his 76th birthday. The elderly composer was carried into the university hall on a chair. Overcome by the power of his own music and by the congratulations

of all those present, he left the hall at the end of the first part, having been kissed on the hand by his former pupil Beethoven. This would be his last public appearance.

Harmony and confidence

The structure of *Die Schöpfung* is clear. With a daring orchestral introduction full of unresolved harmonies Haydn depicts chaos in musical form. This is followed by six 'chapters' documenting each of the six days of God's labours. Musically, the fifth and sixth days take longer- together forming the second part of the oratorio – and

describe *Die Schöpfung* of the birds, and the beasts, and man himself. Each day ends with a song of praise from the four-part choir.

At the centre of the gently moralising third part are two extensive duets sung by Adam and Eve. The scenes are set in the Garden of Eden, long before the original sin that archangel Uriel warns the radiant couple about in his final recitative. There is little else on the subject of evil dwelt upon in *Die Schöpfung*. Only at the end of the first day is there a description of the fall of the hell spirits to an 'endless night'. Apart from that, the dominant moods are joy, harmony, and confidence in the future, in accordance with the spirit of the Enlightenment, of which this oratorio is a late but typical example.

Whilst a lesser composer could have struggled to create such a work with its lack of conflicts and drama, Haydn is able to sustain the tension with a richly varied musical language. Just a few highlights are the magical moment when on the first day there is light, the exuberant chorus that ends the fourth day, and the moving recitative of archangel Rafael's call on the fifth day for the whales to multiply.

Also extremely absorbing are the numerous examples of onomatopoeia with which Haydn adds extra power to his descriptions of nature. And with his musical descriptions of snow, the waves of the sea, the sunrise, and a long list of animals, from tiger to turtle dove, Haydn gives a nod to tradition. In the romantic era many found this technique to be old fashioned, but it is something that today's music lovers adore.

Michel Khalifa



Photo: Friso Keuris

Jan Willem de Vriend - Conductor

Current position: principal guest conductor Stuttgarter Philharmoniker; principal guest conductor Orquestra Simfónica de Barcelona; principal guest conductor Orchestre National de Lille; artist in residence Stavanger Symphony Orchestra

Previously: principal guest conductor Residentie Orkest The Hague; chief conductor Orkest van het Oosten (2006-2018); principal guest conductor Brabants Orkest (2008-2013)

Education: violin, conservatories Amsterdam and The Hague

Breakthrough: 1982, as founder and artistic leader Combattimento Consort Amsterdam

Subsequently: guest appearances with Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg, Zürich Tonhalle Orchester, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, NDR Sinfonieorchester Hannover

Opera: 17th and 18th century operas with Combattimento Consort; Sankt Moritz Festival Basel

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2014

Lucy Crowe - soprano

Born: Staffordshire, England

Education: Royal Academy of Music, London

Awards: Royal Overseas Gold Medal (2002), Kathleen Ferrier Award (2005, second prize)

Breakthrough: 2009, debut Royal Opera House Covent Garden

Subsequently: opera at Glyndebourne Festival, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bavarian State Opera, Metropolitan Opera New York, Dutch National Opera, solos with Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Monteverdi Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra with conductors such as Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Daniel Harding, Andris Nelsons, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and Sir Simon Rattle

Recitals: Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Carnegie Hall, festivals of Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, and Salzburg, Mostly Mozart, BBC Proms

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2022



Photo: Victoria Cadisch

Mauro Peter - tenor

Born: Lucerne, Switzerland

Education: Munich Hochschule für Musik und Theater with Fenna Kügel-Seifried, Theaterakademie August Everding

Awards: International Robert Schumann Competition Zwickau (2012): first prize and audience prize

Breakthrough: 2012: debuts Prinzregententheater Munich, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, and Salzburg Festival

Subsequently: opera at Zürich Opernhaus, Theater an der Wien, Opéra National de Paris, Bavarian State Opera, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Teatro alla Scala, Semperoper Dresden, Opéra de Lyon

In concert: Boston Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orkestra, Munich Philharmonic, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Vienna Symphonic with conductors such as Andris Nelsons, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Trevor Pinnock, Fabio Luisi, Iván Fischer, Nikolaus Harnoncourt

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2022



Photo: Christian Felber

Christopher Purves - Bass

Born: Cambridge, England

Education: King's College, Cambridge

First fame: rock group Harvey and the Wallbangers

Classical breakthrough: at the opera, in Donizetti's Don Pasquale

Subsequently: Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Scottish Opera, Opéra Comique de Paris, Teatro alla Scala, Dutch National Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera

In concert: New York Philharmonic Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Le Concert d'Astrée, Academy of Ancient Music with conductors such as Richard Egarr, Alan Gilbert, Emmanuelle Haïm, Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Masaaki Suzuki

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2007



Photo: Chris Gloag



Photo: Wiecher Mandemaker

Laurens Collegium - chorus

Founded: 2002 by Barend Schuurman

Present conductor: Wiecher Mandemaker

Chorus members: young professional singers

Repertoire: music for chamber choir from all period styles

Identity: as a part of Laurens Vocaal, the Laurens Collegium marks important events both in Rotterdam and outside, such as commemorations and holidays, programming its concerts around current themes

Co-operations: Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Residentie Orkest with conductors such as Frans Brüggen, Stéphane Denève, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Lahav Shani, and Jaap van Zweden, projects with Natuurmonumenten and Ntjam Rosie

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2011

Agenda

Thu 22 December 2022 • 20.15

Fri 23 December 2022 • 20.15
conductor **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**
choir **Nationaal Kinderkoor** and
Nationaal Jongenskoor
Tchaikovsky The Nutcracker

Sun 8 January 2023 • 10.30

Music for Breakfast No. 2
with **Ron Tjhuis** (Cor Anglais), **Carla Schrijner** (Cello), and colleagues
from the orchestra
Chamber Music by **Honegger**,
M. Haydn, **Onslow**, **Broemel**, and
Vaughan Williams

Thu 12 January 2023 • 20.15

Fri 13 January 2023 • 20.15

Sun 15 January 2023 • 14.15

conductor **Lahav Shani**
piano **Daniil Trifonov**
Beethoven Piano Concerto no. 1
Strauss Ein Heldenleben

Sun 12 February 2023 • 10.30

Music for Breakfast No. 3
with **Charlotte Sprenkels** (Harp),
Veronika Lénártová (Viola), and
colleagues from the orchestra
Chamber Music by **Mozart**,
Takemitsu, **Ibert** and **Debussy**

Thu 24 February 2023 • 20.15

Sun 26 February 2023 • 14.15

conductor **Lahav Shani**
mezzosoprano (Judith) **Claudia Mahnke**
baritone (Bluebeard) **Johannes Martin Kränzle**
Ligeti Atmosphères
Bartók Duke Bluebeard's Castle

Thu 9 March 2023 • 20.15

Fri 10 March 2023 • 20.15

Sun 12 March 2023 • 14.15

conductor **Jordi Savall**
Rebel Les éléments
Marais Airs pour les Matelots et les Tritons
Händel Water Music
Rameau Selection from Les Indes Galantes and Hippolyte et Aricie

Musicians

Chief Conductor

Lahav Shani

Honorary Conductor

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Principal Assistant Conductor

Bertie Baigent

First Violin

Igor Gruppman,
leader
Marieke Blankestijn,
leader
Quirine Scheffers
Hed Yaron Meyerson
Saskia Otto
Arno Bons
Mireille van der Wart
Cor van der Linden
Rachel Browne
Maria Dingjan
Marie-José Schrijner
Noëmi Bodden
Petra Visser
Sophia Torrenza
Hadewijch Hofland
Annerien Stuker
Alexandra van Beveren
Koen Stapert

Second Violin

Charlotte Potgieter
Cecilia Ziano
Frank de Groot
Laurens van Vliet
Tomoko Hara
Elina Staphorsius
Jun Yi Dou
Bob Bruyn
Letizia Sciarone
Eefje Habraken
Maija Reinikainen
Wim Ruitenbeek
Babette van den Berg
Melanie Broers

Viola

Anne Huser
Roman Spitzer
Galahad Samson
Kerstin Bonk
Lex Prummel
Janine Baller
Francis Saunders
Veronika Lénártová
Rosalinde Kluck
León van den Berg
Olffe van der Klein

Cello

Emanuele Silvestri
Joanna Pachucka
Daniel Petrovitsch
Mario Rio
Gé van Leeuwen
Eelco Beinema
Carla Schrijner
Pepijn Meeuws
Yi-Ting Fang

Double Bass

Matthew Midgley
Ying Lai Green
Jonathan Focquaert
Robert Franenberg
Harke Wiersma
Arjen Leendertz
Ricardo Neto

Flute

Juliette Hurel
Joséphine Olech
Désirée Woudenberg

Flute/Piccolo

Beatriz Da Baião

Oboe

Remco de Vries
Karel Schoofs
Anja van der Maten

Oboe/Cor Anglais

Ron Tjhuis

Clarinet

Julien Hervé
Bruno Bonansea

Clarinet/ Bass Clarinet

Romke-Jan Wijmenga

Bassoon

Pieter Nuytten
Lola Descours
Marianne Prommel

Bassoon/ Contrabassoon

Hans Wisse

Horn

David Fernández
Alonso
Wendy Leliveld
Richard Speetjens
Laurens Otto
Pierre Buizer

Trumpet

Alex Elia
Simon Wierenga
Jos Verspagen

Trombone

Pierre Volders
Alexander Verbeek
Remko de Jager

Bass Trombone

Rommert Groenhof

Tuba

Hendrik-Jan Renes

Timpani

Danny van de Wal

Percussion

Ronald Ent
Martijn Boom
Adriaan Feyaerts

Harp

Charlotte Sprenkels