

Haydn's masterpiece marks triumphant end to 2009 season

Wed 9, Thu 10, Fri 11, Sat 12 December
Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall

Let the Sydney Symphony be your guide this December for a journey back to where it all began with performances of Haydn's choral masterpiece, *The Creation*. From the representation of chaos giving way to light through to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, *The Creation* is the ultimate showcase of Haydn's extraordinary compositional powers.

And who better to lead the Sydney Symphony through their final glorious performances for 2009 than Haydn's countryman and award-winning Austrian conductor Martin Haselböck, who is making his Australian conducting debut.

A vivid portrait of the seven days of creation depicted through striking musical images, *The Creation* was composed over three years. According to an 18th-century story, Haydn was seeking to rival the success of Handel's *Messiah*: a London friend handed him a Bible and advised him to begin at the beginning. Whether the story's true or not, Haydn left England in 1795 with a libretto for *The Creation* in his luggage and the magnificent oratorio he composed beautifully displays his zest for life, witty humour and strong religious faith.

Three soloists narrate, act and comment on the story, taking on the voices of the archangels Gabriel (Australian Sara Macliver, soprano), Uriel (Steve Davislim, Australian tenor who returns home for this performance) and Raphael (Austrian baritone Florian Boesch). The Cantillation chorus plays the role of angels glorifying their maker.

Haydn finds superb ways of musically representing the various stages of creation, as the waters are separated, the earth is formed, and the heavens are filled with the sun, moon and stars. This is followed by the appearance of Adam and Eve (baritone and soprano, who act as well as sing) who are filled with wonder of the perfection of this newly created world, a world which Haydn fills with vivid musical storms, sunrises and colourful depictions of animals and birds. Finally, the soloists and choir combine for the last uplifting chorus of praise to God.

The first public performance of the work in Vienna in 1799 was given rave reviews and was performed to sell-out crowds with one of Haydn's friends writing: '...the enchantment of the electrified Viennese was so general that the orchestra could not proceed for some minutes...' Haydn's triumph has managed to transcend centuries, and to this day is considered to be the ultimate showcase of the man who became known as the 'father of the symphony'.

Having been heavily involved in the 2009 bicentennial commemorations of Haydn in his homeland, Martin Haselböck will offer special insight. He will conduct the orchestra and also play continuo on forte piano for these performances. While as a conductor Haselböck is known as one of the most perceptive interpreters of

classical music, he is also a champion of the contemporary. He recently collaborated with renowned actor John Malkovich on *The Infernal Comedy – Confessions of a Serial Killer* – an experimental work based on the life of Austrian serial killer Jack Unterweger, which combines theatre, opera and video with a dramatic orchestral score. Haselböck is also the Court Organist for Vienna and has enjoyed a successful career as a solo organist, with his broad repertoire documented in over sixty recordings.

These performances of *The Creation* series of concerts will be the Sydney Symphony's last concerts for the year, and with Haselböck on board, what a way to finish!

CONCERT DETAILS

HAYDN *The Creation* (sung in English)
**Presented by EnergyAustralia
and Trust**

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall

9, 11, 12 December, 8pm

10 December, 1.30pm

Martin Haselböck conductor
Sara Macliver soprano (Gabriel, Eve)
Steve Davislim tenor (Uriel)
Florian Boesch baritone (Raphael, Adam)
Cantillation chorus

Tickets from \$35 (booking fee of \$4 - \$8.50 may apply).

Bookings through Sydney Symphony 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday on 8215 4600 or select your own seat at:
www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com

Pre-concert talk by Tony Cane in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before each performance.

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