

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE ■ SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS
GEORGE SHANGROW, MUSIC DIRECTOR
2007-2008 SEASON

JOSEPH HAYDN

Die Jahreszeiten

THE SEASONS



Please disconnect signal watches, pagers and cellular telephones. Thank you.
The use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted in the concert hall.

JOSEPH

Die Fah

THE SE

Der Frühling / Spring

Nr. 1. Einleitung

Rezitativ (Simon, Lukas, Hanne) Seht, wie der strenge Winter flieht
See, how sad gloomy winter flies

Nr. 2. Chor Komm, holder Lenz
Come, gentle spring

Nr. 3. Rezitativ (Simon) Vom Widder strahlet jetzt
Now in his course the sun

Nr. 4. Arie (Simon) Schon eilet froh der Ackersmann
With eagerness the husbandman

Nr. 5. Rezitativ (Lukas) Der Landmann hat sein Werk vollbracht
The countryman has done his due

Nr. 6. Terzett und Chor (Lukas, Simon, Hanne, Chor) Sei nun gnädig
Be now gracious

Nr. 7. Rezitativ (Hanne) Erhört ist unser Flehn
Our humble pray'rs are heard

Nr. 8. Freudenlied (Hanne, Lukas, Simon, Chor) O wie lieblich ist der Anblick
O what num'rous charms

Nr. 9. Chor (Hanne, Lukas, Simon, Chor) Ewiger, mächtiger
Endless God, mighty God

Der Sommer / Summer

Nr. 10. Rezitativ (Lukas, Simon) In grauem Schleier rückt heran
Her face in dewy veil conceal'd

Nr. 11. Arie (Simon) Der muntre Hirt versammelt nun
The ready swain is gath'ring now

Rezitativ (Hanne) Die Morgenröte bricht hervor
With rosy steps youngday pours in

Nr. 12. Terzett und Chor (Hanne, Lukas, Simon, Chor) Sie steigt herauf, die Sonne
The sun ascends, he mounts

Nr. 13. Rezitativ (Simon) Nun regt und bewegt sich
Now comes in swarms

Nr. 14. Rezitativ (Lukas) Die Mittagssonne brennet jetzt
'Tis noon, and vertical

Nr. 15. Kavatine (Lukas) Dem Druck erliegt die Natur
Distressfull nature fainting sinks

Nr. 16. Rezitativ (Hanne) Willkommen jetzt, o dunkler Hain
O welcome now, ye shady groves

Nr. 17. Arie (Hanne) Welche Labung für die Sinne
O what comfort to the senses

Nr. 18. Rezitativ (Simon, Lukas, Hanne) O seht, es steigt in der schwülen Luft
Behold, on yonder edge of mountains high

Nr. 19. Chor Ach, das Ungewitter naht
O, the tempest comes o'er head

Nr. 20. Terzett mit Chor (Lukas, Hanne, Simon, Chor) Die düstren Wolken trennen sich
The cloudy welkin now clears up



HAYDN

reszeiten

SONGSONGS

Der Herbst / Autumn

Nr. 21. Einleitung

Rezitativ (Hanne) Was durch seine Blüte
What by various blossoms

Nr. 22. Rezitativ (Lukas, Simon) Den reichen Vorrat führt er nun
Th' abundant harvest now he brings

Nr. 23. Terzett mit Chor (Simon, Hanne, Lukas, Chor) So lohnet die Natur den Fleiß
So nature ever kind repays

Nr. 24. Rezitativ (Hanne, Simon, Lukas) Seht, wie zum Haselbusch dort
Behold, how to the hazelbush

Nr. 25. Duett (Lukas, Hanne) Ihr Schönen aus der Stadt, kommt her
O ladies fine and fair, o come

Nr. 26. Rezitativ (Simon) Nun zeigt das entblößte Feld
Now on the stripped fields appear

Nr. 27. Arie (Simon) Seht auf die breiten Wiesen hin
Behold the wide extended meads

Nr. 28. Rezitativ (Lukas) Hier treibt ein dichter Kreis
Here closed rings compel

Nr. 29. Chor Hört das laute Getöse
Hear the clank and the noise

Nr. 30. Rezitativ (Hanne, Simon, Lukas) Am Rebenstocke blinket jetzt
The vineyard now in clusters bright

Nr. 31. Chor Juchhe, der Wein ist da
Heyday, the liquor flows

Der Winter / Winter

Nr. 32. Einleitung

Nr. 33. Rezitativ (Simon, Hanne) Nun senket sich das blasse Jahr
Now sinks the pale declining year

Nr. 34. Kavatine (Hanne) Licht und Leben sind geschwächt
Light and life in sadness languish

Nr. 35. Rezitativ (Lukas) Gefesselt steht der breite See
By frost cemented stands the lake

Nr. 36. Arie (Lukas) Hier steht der Wanderer nun
Here stands the wand'rer now

Nr. 37. Rezitativ (Lukas, Hanne, Simon) So wie er naht, schallt in sein Ohr
As he draws nigh, soon to his ears

Nr. 38. Lied mit Chor (Hanne, Chor) Knurre, schnurre, knurre
Set the wheel agoing

Nr. 39. Rezitativ (Lukas) Abgesponnen ist der Flachs
Th' ev'ning task performed is

Nr. 40. Lied mit Chor (Hanne, Chor) Ein Mädchen, das auf Ehre hielt
An honest countrygirl there was

Nr. 41. Rezitativ (Simon) Vom dürrn Oste dringt
Now from the livid East

Nr. 42. Arie (Simon) Erblicke hier, betörter Mensch
Behold, o weak and foolish man

Nr. 43. Rezitativ (Simon) Sie bleibt allein und leitet uns
Alone she strays! Alone she too

Nr. 44. Terzett und Doppeldor (Simon, Lukas, Hanne, Chor) .. Dann bricht der große Morgen an
Then comes the great and glorious morn



PROGRAM NOTES

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809): THE SEASONS

Oratorio for Three Solo Voices, Chorus and Orchestra

The work, composed between 1799 and 1801, is scored for an orchestra of 2 flutes (1 doubling a piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, percussion, keyboard, and strings; 4-part chorus; and 3 vocal soloists (bass, tenor, and soprano).

In 1805, four years before his death at the age of seventy-seven, Joseph Haydn wrote on the subject of his health: "only eight years ago it was another matter: but the four seasons did not bring me luck. I should not have written them. I was worn out by it." Indeed, when he felt too weak to receive visitors, he sent them a "visiting card," on which was written a short musical fragment accompanied by the words, "Gone is all my strength, Old and weak am I." Perhaps the composer, the eldest and longest-lived of all the great 18th-century classical composers whose lives and work centered around Vienna, had indeed poured the last of his strength, his joyful spirit, his fine intellect, and his exuberant creativity into the oratorio, *Die Jahreszeiten* (The Seasons), which we enjoy together this afternoon.

While great composers often have among their ancestors one or more persons of marked artistic or intellectual inclinations (e.g., J. S. Bach, whose family contained a remarkable number of noted musicians), Joseph Haydn, one of the most independent spirits in the history of music, was exceptional in this respect also: in tracing his ancestry back to his great-grandfathers on both sides, it is difficult to find among them musicians or even someone who engaged in any sort of intellectual occupation. Haydn's forebears were, however, hard-working, honest men and women whose endless diligence, patience, and tenacity helped to raise them from extreme poverty to well-ordered circumstances and positions of respect in their communities. Joseph Haydn employed these characteristics in conjunction with unusual musical gifts to accomplish during his lifetime a single-handed and tremendous conquest of all of musical Europe such as had never before occurred in the history of music.

The Man

The exact date of Haydn's birth remains uncertain. The parish register of Rohrau, a small Austrian town about 31 miles southeast of Vienna near the Hungarian frontier, records the birth of Franciscus Josephus Haiden under the date April 1, 1732, but Haydn himself gave the date March 31 in a brief biographical sketch published in 1776. When asked about the discrepancy, he said, "My brother Michael preferred to claim that I was born on March 31 because he didn't want people to say that I came into the world as an April fool." Joseph was the

second eldest of the dozen children of Mathias Haydn, a master wheelwright and market magistrate, and his first wife, Anna Maria, who had been a cook at a neighboring castle. Although he could not read music, Mathias loved music and used to sing Austrian folksongs, accompanying himself on a harp which he had acquired and learned to play while traveling. By the age of five, Joseph displayed a lovely singing voice and could sing his father's songs, keeping perfect time as he pretended to accompany his singing on an imaginary violin, an instrument which he had seen played by the local schoolmaster.

When Joseph was six, a distant relative-by-marriage, Johann Mathias Franck, the headmaster of the school at the nearby town of Hainburg, and the organist and director of music at the town's largest church, visited the Haydn family. Upon observing little Joseph's musical inclinations, Franck persuaded the boy's parents (who would seldom see their son again) to send Joseph with him to become a pupil at his school, so that he could receive the education that would allow him to become a clergyman, as his mother wished. Thus the child found himself at Franck's school in Hainburg, where, for two years, in addition to regular schoolwork, he studied violin, harpsichord, and other musical instruments, including the kettledrums, for which he developed a lifelong fondness (he was able, in London in 1791, to play the timpani in one of his symphonies well enough to garner the great admiration of the rest of the orchestra!). Life with Franck was harsh, and Joseph remembered that he sometimes received "more thrashings than food," but the boy did learn much about music, and he said later that he was grateful to Franck for making him work so hard.

In 1740, Karl Georg Reutter, choirmaster of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, visited Hainburg hoping to find some talented boys for his choir. So impressed was he by Joseph's singing that he accepted him as a choirboy, and, soon after his eighth birthday, young Joseph arrived in the capital of the Austrian Empire, where he was to remain for more than 20 years. Joseph's life as a cathedral choirboy was no easier than at the school in Hainburg. The ambitious Reutter advanced his own career at the expense of the education and welfare of his choirboys, who were neglected and half-starved. They all looked forward eagerly to the times when they were asked to sing at private gatherings for the wealthy, for only then did they receive sufficient food. "I loved these concerts so much that I tried to sing as beautifully as I could, to get myself invited," Haydn said later. Though Reutter had promised to teach Joseph composition, "he gave me nothing except a lot of harsh treatment," Haydn remembered.

By the autumn of 1749, Joseph's beautiful singing voice had broken, and the Empress Maria Theresa complained to Reutter that "he sings like a crow." He was no longer of much use to the cathedral choir, and, by cutting off the pigtail of one of his fellow choristers with a pair of scissors, he gave Reutter a good excuse to expel him. After giving him a sound caning, the sadistic choirmaster threw the youth out into the street with neither money nor clothes other than the ragged ones on his back. But by chance he met one Johann Michael Spangler, a young musician whom he knew, who kindly offered Joseph lodging in the small garret that he occupied with his family. Here Joseph lived until he was lent some money by a friend of his father's who had heard of the young musician's plight. With this money, he rented a "miserable little attic room without a stove," and managed to earn a meager living by singing tenor in the cathedral choir, doing some teaching, and playing the violin for religious services, parties, or private evening concerts. He also studied music theory, played the keyboard sonatas of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, one of J. S. Bach's sons, and wrote music of his own—piano sonatas, trios, and dances.

Through his music-making, Haydn also began to make some significant contacts in Viennese society. He became music teacher to a young girl whose guardian was the Italian poet, Metastasio, who lived on the third floor of Haydn's lodging house. This music pupil also took singing lessons from another famous Italian musician employed by the Viennese court, Nicola Porpora, and soon after meeting him, Haydn became Porpora's assistant and valet. In 1759, he became music director to Count Karl Joseph Franz Morzin, who wintered in Vienna. The first symphony Haydn wrote for the Count's small orchestra was heard by the powerful nobleman, Prince Paul Anton Esterházy, who was so charmed by the piece that he offered the composer a post as his assistant Kapellmeister (music director).

Haydn accepted the post, but before taking up his duties, he married. Maria Anna Keller and her younger sister were daughters of a hairdresser, and had been among Haydn's music pupils. The youthful musician fell in love with the younger sister, but she chose to enter a convent. Haydn therefore married the elder sister, Maria Anna, on November 26, 1760, when he was 28 and she 32, perhaps to console himself, and perhaps out of a mistaken sense of duty to her father, who could not provide for his elder daughter. The marriage proved to be a life-long disaster, for Maria appears to have become the classic shrewish wife of a genius whom she did not understand. She was described as ill-tempered, unattractive, indifferent to music, incapable of providing either a home or children, and concerned only with her duties to the church. She is said to have

used her husband's manuscripts as linings for her pastry tins and as hair curlers. "She has no virtues," said Haydn, "and it is entirely indifferent to her whether her husband is a shoemaker or an artist." Though "la bestia infernale" was the bane of his life for 40 years, Haydn endured her with remarkable patience until her death in 1800.

On May 1, 1761, Haydn became an employee of Prince Esterházy, a string player and a great music lover who owned 25 castles and huge tracts of land. The composer was required, among other duties, to train the singers, rehearse the orchestra, keep all the instruments and music in good condition, settle disputes among the musical staff, and compose music when required by the Prince, in return for food, lodging, and an annual salary of about \$1530 in today's currency. The Prince, however, died within a year of Haydn's engagement as assistant music director, and his middle-aged brother, Prince Nicholas, succeeded to the title. The Prince made constant demands on the skills of his court composer, and Haydn produced a steady stream of new works: symphonies, string quartets, trios, concertos, works for the baryton (an instrument related to the viol family which is now obsolete, but which the Prince loved to play), and many other "occasional pieces" for the entertainment of the household. When the Prince's old Kapellmeister died in 1766, Haydn found himself in sole charge of the Prince's musical establishment, and the fame of the music at Eszterháza soon spread throughout Europe.

In 1764, the Prince visited the French palace of Versailles, and, inspired by its splendors, decided to build himself a sumptuous new summer palace. Within just two years, a marsh beside Lake Neusiedler had been drained and a breathtaking palace called Eszterháza, costing about \$414 million in today's currency, was ready for occupation. In 1768, the Prince had a theater built on the castle grounds, and Haydn was required, in addition to all of his other duties, to supply music for the daily theatrical performances which the Prince demanded. Over the next fifteen years or so, Haydn wrote about twelve operas for performance in this state-of-the-art facility. "If I want to hear a good opera, I go to Eszterháza," said the Empress Maria Theresa, following a performance of one of Haydn's operas at the palace theater in 1773.

Haydn spent nearly 30 years in the musical service of Prince Nicholas. "My Prince was always satisfied with my works," Haydn wrote. "I not only had the encouragement of his constant approval, but as conductor of the orchestra, I could experiment, see what produced a good effect, and what spoilt it, and I was thus able to improve, alter, add or cut as boldly as I pleased. I was completely isolated from the world, there was no one to bother me, and I was forced to become original." The Prince kept his

Kapellmeister very busy indeed: Haydn had to rehearse the orchestra for two concerts a week and to prepare all of the opera performances. In addition, the composer continued to produce new symphonies and string quartets.

The year 1779 was an especially significant one for Haydn: First, he signed a new contract with his employer which allowed him for the first time to write and publish music for other people. Second, he fell in love with a young Italian singer named Luigia Polzelli, who was nearly 30 years Haydn's junior, and who was most unhappily married to an elderly violinist. The Polzellis were engaged as musicians by the Prince, but neither proved to be a good artist, and the Prince soon wanted to dismiss them. Haydn intervened, however, and seems to have caused a considerable scandal by carrying on an affair with Luigia which continued until she returned to Italy after her husband's death in 1791, and it was commonly believed that Luigia's second son, Antonio, born in 1783, was Haydn's child. Even nine years later, when Haydn's own wife finally died, Luigia persuaded Haydn to sign a promise that he would marry no one else (she in fact married someone else not long before Haydn's death, whereas Haydn never remarried), and Haydn assisted Luigia and her sons financially throughout his life.

The 1780s were busy and eventful years for Haydn. Sometime during the early years of the decade, he met and became good friends with the young musical genius from Salzburg, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The two musicians sometimes played chamber music together (Haydn playing the violin and Mozart the viola), and they greatly admired, and positively influenced, one another's works. As a result of the many publications of Haydn's music, his reputation spread throughout Europe, and he received numerous commissions. By 1789, the year of the French Revolution, the composer was growing tired of the restrictions of his life at Eszterháza, where he was still treated as a servant and given no personal freedom. In September 1790, as the Old Regime began to crumble, Prince Nicholas died, and his son and successor, Anton, immediately dismissed the orchestra and choir at the palace. Haydn was allocated a generous annual pension in recognition of his many years of faithful musical service to the family, but he was still technically a servant of the Prince and had to ask his permission to work for anyone else.

Late in 1790, Haydn was visited by a well-known violinist and London concert promoter, Johann Peter Salomon, who proposed to take Haydn to London with him to conduct twenty concerts, and offered him \$2160 for a new opera, six symphonies, and several other works. The composer, who could not speak a single word of English, accepted Salomon's offer, obtained the necessary leave from

Prince Anton, and left Vienna for London on December 15, 1790. His London advent created a sensation; he was treated like royalty, his new pieces received rave reviews, and in July 1791, he was invited to Oxford, where the honorary degree of Doctor of Music was conferred upon the 59-year-old musical master. Haydn remained in London until the end of June 1792, and greatly relished his musical successes, but chiefly enjoyed having the personal freedom which he had sought for so long. His departure for Vienna must have been painful, for during his stay he had formed a deep friendship with a widow named Rebecca Schroeter, to whom he had given piano lessons, and who fell in love with both her teacher and his music. Years later, Haydn confessed to a friend that Rebecca "was a very attractive woman, and still handsome though over sixty; and had I been free I should certainly have married her."

On his way back to Vienna, Haydn was introduced to and strongly impressed by a budding composer named Ludwig van Beethoven. Haydn took the willful and unruly young musician as a pupil, but the relationship proved unworkable, and Beethoven later complained that he did not learn anything from the elder composer. As he matured, however, Beethoven came to understand the selflessly generous nature of Haydn the man, and in March 1808 was present at a performance of Haydn's oratorio, *The Creation*, to pay tribute to the aged master on his last appearance in Vienna.

By the summer of 1793, Haydn had planned a second visit to London, having found life in Vienna rather dull compared to the stimulating musical life of England. He arrived in London in January 1794, and his second stay there was even more successful than his first. The last three of his approximately 106 symphonies were performed to rapturous acclaim; he was presented at court, and the music-loving King, George III, tried hard but unsuccessfully to persuade him to remain in England, Queen Charlotte even offering him a suite in Windsor Castle! Haydn soon learned that Prince Anton Esterházy had died, and the new Prince, Nicholas II, wished to reconstitute the orchestra and choir at his court in Eisenstadt, with Haydn as Kapellmeister. So the composer returned to Vienna in August 1795, about \$2700 richer as a result of his "English experience."

Haydn's new patron disliked instrumental music, and required of his Kapellmeister only that he compose a mass each year for the name-day of the Prince's wife, and Haydn duly produced six in as many years, which are among his greatest compositions. By attending a vast Handel Festival in Westminster Abbey in 1791 and hearing a performance of *Messiah* ("Here is the master of us all!" Haydn said of Handel), Haydn was inspired to try his hand at the composition of a grand oratorio. His

first work in this genre, *The Creation*, was first performed in Vienna in 1798, and it was also performed with tremendous success in 1800 in London and in Paris, where Napoleon, a great admirer of the composer, would have attended the performance had someone not attempted to assassinate him en route to the theater!

In 1797, Haydn realized his dream of composing a national anthem for Austria—a dream which he had cherished since hearing *God Save the King* in London—by producing one of his most famous works, "God Save the Emperor Franz," a wonderfully simple patriotic hymn setting. The piece remained the Austrian National Anthem until the fall of the Hapsburg dynasty during World War I. Three years later, the celebrated composer was at last released from his miserable marriage by his wife's death, but by that time he felt too old and tired to consider remarriage. He lived in a house he had purchased in a Vienna suburb, and there enjoyed a regular routine, rising at 6:30 a.m., teaching and composing in the mornings, taking lunch in the early afternoon, working again into the evening, going out around 8 p.m. and returning at 9 p.m. to orchestrate his musical sketches or to read, dining on a light supper of bread and wine at 10 p.m., and retiring after 11:30 p.m.

Haydn spent the summer of 1800 at Eisenstadt, working on a new oratorio, *The Seasons*, which portrays a year's cycle in the life of the countryside. First performed privately on April 24, 1801, at Prince Schwarzenberg's palace, it had been most eagerly anticipated, and it was so enthusiastically received that it was repeated twice within the week. Although the oratorio made Haydn and his friends a great deal of money, the composer was completely exhausted by his work on it ("The Seasons has finished me off," he said), and he wrote very little more during the last six years of his life; his last quartet, which remained unfinished, dates from 1803. Though the Esterházy family provided the composer with the best of care, his health slowly deteriorated. The stream of honors from royalty flowed over him unabated, however: in 1804, the year in which he finally resigned his official post as the Esterházy's Kapellmeister, he was granted the freedom of the city of Vienna. His last public appearance took place on March 27, 1808, at a performance of *The Creation* given in honor of his 76th birthday. He was so overcome by the occasion and the thunderous applause of the large and distinguished audience that he had to be taken home during the intermission.

In May 1809, when Napoleon's troops occupied Vienna, the conqueror had a guard of honor placed outside Haydn's door. The venerable and extremely prolific composer (whose works include 25 operas, 15 masses, eight cantatas and two oratorios, hundreds of arrangements of British

folksongs, 52 original songs to German words, around 106 symphonies, 68 string quartets, 32 piano trios, over 20 divertimentos for string trio, 126 baryton trios, 11 pieces for mechanical clocks, 53 piano sonatas, numerous concertos for various instruments, and many overtures, minuets, marches, dances, etc. for orchestra) finally died on May 31, 1809, and two weeks later, the "whole art-loving world of Vienna" attended a great memorial service at a church in the center of the city, at which Mozart's Requiem was performed. The assiduous, generous, and ever-genial lover of God and nature had captured all his hearers' hearts through the humor, the noble popularity, and the easy accessibility of his musical language, with which he expressed the irrepressible joyfulness of spirit that he himself described in a letter he wrote a few years prior to his death:

"Often when contending with obstacles of every sort that interfered with my work, often when my powers both of body and mind were failing and I felt it a hard matter to persevere on the course I had entered on, a secret feeling within me whispered: 'There are but few contented and happy men here below; grief and care prevail everywhere; perhaps your labors may one day be the source from which the weary and worn, or the man burdened with affairs, may derive a few moments' rest and refreshment.' What a powerful motive for pressing onward!"

The Music

Soon after the completion of *The Creation* in 1798, Haydn began to work on another large-scale vocal work, on which he labored until 1801. Haydn's librettist was the director of the imperial library, Baron Gottfried van Swieten, a wealthy Dutchman and amateur composer with a keen interest in the music of Handel and J. S. Bach, who had suggested the subject matter for *The Creation*. Van Swieten took his inspiration from the British poet, James Thomson, whose best-known work was "Rule Britannia." Thomson's epic poem, *The Seasons*, had been published in installments between 1726 and 1728, and van Swieten translated it into German and built upon the ideas in the poem a German text of his own, featuring three invented characters (taken by the soloists), a farmer named Simon, his daughter, Hanne, and her suitor, Lukas. The result was an unusual oratorio text, in which grand fugal choruses in praise of God and in thankfulness for the beauties of nature are juxtaposed with more homely, picturesque, and rustic scenes.

Van Swieten appears to have been a difficult person to deal with, and Haydn seems to have become impatient with some of the demands he made upon him. The composer found much of the

new libretto trivial and frivolous, and complained about having to paint musical pictures depicting murmuring streams, croaking frogs, cock-crows, etc., though these "imitations of nature" are in fact quite delightful. When he had to write music for a text in praise of industry, Haydn observed that, though he had always been very industrious himself, it had never occurred to him to set "industry" to music! Haydn was apparently embarrassed by some of the required musical "special effects," writing to his publisher, Brietkopf: "This Frenchified trash was forced upon me;" this remark found its way into the newspapers and caused something of a rift between the librettist, who promised to rub this remark into Haydn with "salt and pepper," and the composer, but van Swieten was too happily enjoying the rewards of his previous collaboration with Haydn to disrupt their relationship, and the breach healed. Haydn, approaching the age of 70, felt drained by his labors on the music, but the physical handicaps and difficulties that the composer suffered while writing it are not evident in the results, for his "choral drama" contains some of the composer's most varied and fascinating ideas, some humorous, some pictorial, some grand and uplifting, some brilliantly graphic in an almost romantic manner.

The chief subjects of *The Seasons* are Nature, Humanity's relationship with it, and with its Creator. The work consists of four sections, one for each of the seasons, which are introduced by a descriptive orchestral "tone poem," and featuring the usual subdivisions of recitative, aria, ensemble, and chorus.

The "overture" to "Spring," scored for full orchestra, is inspired by the harshness of a departing winter, and leads into the first recitatives describing winter's banishment. Next comes a chorus praising spring, written in Haydn's most heart-warming style, accompanied by a somber warning by the men's chorus that bitter weather may still reappear. In the rustic aria, "Schon eilet froh der Ackermann," Haydn quotes the famous theme from the slow movement of his own "Surprise" Symphony; there follows a lovely prayer for soloists and choir, "Sei nun gnädig, milder Himmel!" which features a solemn melody followed in Handelian fashion by some brilliantly effective counterpoint. Finally, everyone is invited to enjoy the blessings of spring: the flowers, the new green leaves and budding trees, the cavorting of calves and lambs, and the joys of human courtship. A grand finale of praise to God, the ultimate source of Nature's beauty, concludes the section.

"Summer" opens quietly in an early morning mist. The cock crows, the shepherd pursues his duties, and the sun rises in a radiant burst of choral splendor. The following sequence displays Haydn's most vividly imaginative writing: the cavatina (a short song) depicts the wilting of flowers and the weariness of both man and beast in the sultry midday. Trees

provide a restful shelter in which to enjoy a light breeze or the music of a shepherd's pipe (the oboe and solo soprano lines interweave). But a thunderous summer storm breaks, and Haydn contrives a fugue for the chorus after painting the power of the deluge using downpours of sixteenth-notes and gusts of triplet figures on the strings. When the storm has subsided, life returns to order, with its cattle and crickets, frogs and curfew bell (the effects so irritating to the composer) introducing a peaceful evening of pastoral contentment.

The "Autumn" section contains Haydn's "setting of industry to music," and the composer perhaps suggests the exhausting nature of the agricultural labor that produces an abundant harvest in the vigor of his choral fugue with its harsh modulations. This section also contains a charming rustic love duet for Hanne and Lukas. A hunter and his dog go birding, with the bassoon suggesting the dog tracking and picking up a scent. The dog points, still as a stone, the flock of birds takes to the air and one meets his doom in the "shot" of the timpani. The rabbits are frightened by the sound of approaching hunters on horseback and scurry to their burrows. The hunting horns first sounding in D and then in E-flat when the chase reaches its climax is the finest of Haydn's considerable output of excellent hunting music. The thrill of the hunt leads to a wonderful vignette praising wine and dancing, reportedly described by Haydn as a "sozzled fugue," in which musical lurching and swaying suggest the mirthful inebriation of all the merry-makers.

The contrasting cold and gloom of "Winter" are displayed not only in the amazing orchestral introduction (which some consider Haydn's farewell to music), but in the following recitative and cavatina. The original poem on which the oratorio is based contains a passage about a man losing his way and dying in a snowdrift, and van Swieten suggests some of this in Lukas' aria about the tired traveler, but our wayfarer's journey is brightened by the sight of home. Here, winter can bring both activity and revelry, illustrated by a spinning song and a charming narrative number about a saucy country girl evading the amorous advances of a local squire. But winter also brings thoughts of mortality, beautifully expressed in Simon's last aria, which reflects something of the mood of one of the composer's letters in which he described himself as "overwhelmed by my feeble memory and unstrung nerves." But the oratorio does not end in despair; thoughts of death also lead to thoughts of resurrection, and the final chorus, in which the three soloists join, looks confidently, in music of great splendor, toward the glory of life to come.

Haydn observed that *The Seasons* "is not another Creation . . . this is the reason why: in the one the characters were angels, in the Four Seasons they

are peasants." But one who attended one of the oratorio's first performances wrote that "Silent devotion, astonishment and loud enthusiasm succeeded one another with the listeners; for the most powerful penetration of colossal ideas, the immeasurable quantity of happy thoughts surprised and overpowered even the most daring of imaginations." Another listener wrote that the work "contained many passages which must move the coldest heart to the most gentle emotions, and many which are great, sublime, that sweep us along like a great river and excite one to the greatest enthusiasms." In this work, Joseph Haydn combined his superb musical talents with the compositional expertise he had perfected over the course of his long and prodigiously productive lifetime to produce a work for all times and all seasons. He poured the last of his artistic energies through its notes into the hearts of performers and listeners from his time to our own.

-Notes by Lorelette Knowles

SOLOISTS

Soprano **CATHERINE HAIGHT** is a favorite of Seattle audiences, having performed with a variety of Northwest musical groups over the past sixteen years. In June of 2003 she was privileged to appear as a soloist along with Jane Eaglen and Vinson Cole as a part of the gala program that officially opened McCaw Hall, Seattle's new opera house. Ms. Haight has been a featured soloist with Pacific Northwest Ballet in their productions of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* for over ten years and these performances have taken her to the Kennedy Center, and Melbourne, Australia, where she received glowing reviews. Ms. Haight is especially familiar with the Baroque repertoire, having performed most of the major works of Bach and Handel, but she is equally at home with the composers of the Classical and Romantic eras. A frequent performer with OSSCS, she will perform the soprano solo in *The Seasons* by Haydn later this year. She has made three recordings, including *Messiah*, with OSSCS and conductor George Shangrow. Ms. Haight is a member of the voice faculty at Seattle Pacific University.

WESLEY ROGERS divides his busy singing career between opera and oratorio. Recent concert engagements have included performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Haydn's *Creation*, Honnegar's *King David*, Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*, and the world premiere of Hawley's *Seattle*. Wesley has appeared with the Seattle Choral Company, the Meridian Symphony, the Cascadian Chorale, the Bremerton Symphony, and Belle Arte Concerts. In March 2003, Wesley performed the role of Damon in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* with Santa Fe Pro Musica. On the operatic stage he was most recently seen in the role

of Martin in Sun Valley Center for the Arts' production of Copland's *The Tender Land*. Summer 2002 found Wesley returning to the Lake Chelan Bach Festival where he performed the role of Bastien in Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienna*. He performed the role of Laurie in Mark Adamo's *Little Women* at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz, California. Shortly after moving to the Pacific Northwest, Wesley made his Seattle Opera debut in 2001 as Maintop in Britten's *Billy Budd*. He returned the next season as the Fourth Jew in Strauss' *Salome*. Wesley has also performed roles with companies including Opera Memphis, Washington East Opera, Obsidian Opera, Seattle Community Outreach Productions, and the University of Washington Opera Theatre. He recently completed his Master of Music degree from the University of Washington.

A native of Washington, baritone **BRIAN BOX** received his Master's degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University in 1985. Mr. Box performs frequently with many Northwest ensembles, including OSSCS, Seattle Choral Company, Seattle Pro Musica, Bellevue Chamber Chorus, and Choir of the Sound, and has performed with Rudolf Nureyev, singing Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* to Mr. Nureyev's dance. He has collaborated with OSSCS in such works as Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, *St. John Passion*, and *Christmas Oratorio*, the world premieres of Huntley Beyer's *St. Mark Passion* and *The Mass of Life and Death*, and is featured on the OSSCS recording of Handel's *Messiah*. The regional winner of San Francisco Opera's 1988 Merola Opera Program, he made his Seattle Opera debut as the Corporal in Donizetti's *Daughter of the Regiment*. For Tacoma Opera, Mr. Box created the role of Franz in Carol Sams' *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. He has also performed extensively with Seattle Opera's education program and Northwest Operas in the Schools.



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