



OS ❖ SCS

Orchestra Seattle ❖ Seattle Chamber Singers

May 11, 1997 ❖ 7:00pm

First United Methodist Church
Seattle, Washington

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Orchestra Seattle ❖ Seattle Chamber Singers
George Shangrow, Founder and Music Director
28th Season

PROGRAM

Sunday, May 11, 1997, 7:00pm
First United Methodist Church
Seattle, Washington

Joseph Haydn: The Seasons

- I. Der Frühling/Spring
- II. Der Sommer/Summer
- III. Der Herbst/Autumn
- IV. Der Winter/Winter

Soloists:

Julia Bottett, soprano, as Hanne
Howard Fankhauser, tenor, as Lukas
Brian Box, bass, as Simon

OS ❖ SCS gratefully acknowledges the support of the Washington State Arts Commission, the King County Arts Commission, the Seattle Arts Commission, Corporate Council for the Arts, Seafirst Bank, the Boeing Company, Microsoft Corporation, Davis Wright Tremaine LLP, and Classic KING-FM 98.1.

❖ Orchestra Seattle

Violins

Leah Bartell
Susan Buttram
Stephen Hegg
Deborah Kirkland,
principal second
Fritz Klein,
concertmaster
Pam Kummert
Eileen Lusk
Avron Maletzky
Gregor Nitsche
Sondra Nelson
Susan Ovens
Druska Salisbury-Milan
Janet Showalter

Violas

Saundrah Humphrey
Shari Peterson
Timothy Prior
Robert Shangrow

Sharon Tveten,
principal

Cellos

Evelyn Albrecht
Charles Fuller
Julie Reed, principal
Valerie Ross
Karen Thomson
Matthew Wyant

Basses

Allan Goldman,
principal
Josephine Hansen

Flutes

Kate Alverson,
principal
Megan Lyden

Piccolo

Kate Alverson

Clarinets

Gary Oules
Cindy Renander,
principal

Oboes

M. Shannon Hill,
principal
Susan Worden

Bassoons

Jeff Eldridge
Judith Lawrence,
principal

Horns

Don Crevie
Jennifer Crowder

Laurie Heidt
Bill Hunnicutt

Trumpets

Craig Penrose
Gordon Ullmann,
principal

Trombones

David Brewer
Moc Escobedo,
principal
David Holmes

Timpani

Dan Oie

Harpsichord

George Shangrow

❖ Seattle Chamber Singers

Soprano

Jennifer Adams
Barbara Anderson
Sue Cobb
Crissa Cugini
Kyle DeRemer
Dana Durasoff
Cinda Freece
Lorelette Knowles
Jill Kraakmo
Nancy Lewis
Andra Milleta

Paula Rimmer

Alto

Laila Adams
Sharon Agnew
Margaret Alsup
Cheryl Blackburn
Jane Blackwell
Wendy Borton
Penny Deputy
Suzi Means
Laurie Medill

Veronica Parnitski
Nedra Slauson
Adrienne Thomas

Tenor

Alex Chun
Ralph Cobb
Alvin Kroon
John Lange
Timothy Lunde
Tom Nesbitt
David Zapolsky

Bass

Andrew Danilichik
Douglas Durasoff
Dick Etherington
Dale Heidal
Rob Kline
Martin Knowles
John Stenseth
Richard Wyckoff

❖ Soloists

Julia Bonnett

A winner of several competitions, Julia was the 1994 Metropolitan Opera Auditions Regional Finalist, representing the Northwest. She received degrees from the University of Victoria and Western Washington University, studying and performing works as diverse as Antonia in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffman* and the Narrator in Schönberg's modern masterpiece *Pierrot Lunaire*. She has also acquainted herself with earlier repertoire, performing Bach, Telemann and Mozart with Western Washington's Collegium Musicum while touring Italy and Hungary. Closer to home, Julia has worked extensively with the Seattle Opera Young Artist Education and Outreach Program, including performances in their acclaimed *Opera for the Fun of It* concert series. She made her Seattle Opera mainstage debut performing the roles of the Rooster and Mrs. Pasek in their 1994 production of Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*. In 1995 Julia traveled to Dubai, U.A.E., to seing UNICEF benefit performances of Gretel in J & J Productions' *Hansel and Gretel*. She recently added the role of Juliet to her repertoire for Tacoma Opera's 1996 production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Howard Fankhauser

Howard Fankhauser is a frequent soloist in community and professional choirs and orchestras throughout the Northwest, including the Northwest Chamber

Orchestra, the Seattle Youth Symphony, Cascadian Chorale, and Choir of the Sound. Recent performances have included Mozart cantatas with the Northwest Chamber Orchestra, Handel's *Messiah* at St. Mark's Cathedral, Ophee in Gluck's *Orphee et Eurydice*, guest artist in St. James Cathedral's New Year's Even all-Bach concert, and tenor soloist in Mozart's *Requiem*. In July 1995, Mr. Fankhauser was featured in the Living Composer's Recital at the NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) national convention. He made his debut with OS/SCS in an April 1996 performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*.

Brian Box

Brian Box, bass, is a native of Washington and received his Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University. Mr. Box has appeared frequently with OS/SCS as a soloist in cantatas and oratorios. Among his credits are performances of Brahms' *Four Last Songs* with the Western Washington University Orchestra and the leading role in Dominic Argento's opera *Postcard from Morocco* at the University of British Columbia. He is a regular performer with Northwest Opera in Schools, Etc. (NOISE), and Seattle Opera's education program and made his Seattle Opera solo debut as the Corporal in *The Daughter of the Regiment*.

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❖ Program Notes by Lorelette Knowles

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, and his exuberant creativity into the oratorio, *Die Jahreszeiten* (*The Seasons*), which we enjoy together this evening.

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 through Germany and Austria as a journeyman wheelwright. 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 young 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 skill of his court composer, and Haydn produced a steady stream of new works: symphonies, string quartets, trios, concertos, works for the baryton (a very difficult 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, each others 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, which he soon abandoned because the Austro-Hungarian Empire's war against the Turkish Empire was draining his resources. 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 very enthusiastically received. 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-gentle 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 up to the year 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 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 streams, croaking frogs, cock-crows, etc., though these "imitations of nature" are in fact quite delightful. When he had to set the words 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 the oratorio 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 oratorio consists of four parts, one for each of the seasons, each with its usual subdivisions of recitative, aria, ensemble, and chorus (a novel feature of the score is Haydn's occasional division of his choir into separate women's and men's choruses). Each season is introduced by a descriptive orchestral piece.

The "overture" to "Spring" is inspired by the harshness of winter and is scored for full orchestra, including trombones (instruments rarely used in Classical times). This 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 warning by the men's chorus, in a more somber minor mode, that bitter weather may still reappear. In the famous rustic aria, "Schon eilet froh der Ackermann," Haydn quotes from his own "Surprise" Symphony; there follows a lovely prayer for soloists and choir, "Sei nun gnädig, milder Himmell!" which features a beautiful, 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 frolicking of calves and lambs, and the joys of human courtship. A grand finale of praise to God 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 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 while painting the power of the deluge with triplet figures on the strings. When the storm has passed, the portrait of life returning to order, with its cattle and crickets, frogs and curfew bell (the effects so irritating to the composer), passes into a peaceful evening pastoral of quiet joy.

The "Autumn" section contains Haydn's "setting of industry to music," and the composer perhaps suggests the exhausting nature of agricultural labor in the vigor of his choral fugue with its harsh modulations. This section also contains a charming rustic love duet for Hanne and Lukas. The hunting scene, with the bassoon suggesting the dog tracking and picking up a scent, and horns in D contrasted with horns in E-flat as the choral chase reaches its climactic moments, is the finest of the considerable amount of excellent hunting music that Haydn composed. The excitement of the hunt leads to a wonderful scene praising wine and the dance, in which musical lurching and swaying suggest the cheerful intoxication of all the revelers.

The contrasting mist and gloom of "Winter" are displayed not only in the amazing orchestral introduction (which might be regarded as being Haydn's farewell to music), but in the following recitative and cavatina. The original poem 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 this 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 mortality 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 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.