

## A CREATION TO REMEMBER

Haydn's *The Creation*, performed by Doncaster Choral Society at Priory Methodist Church on 13 November, is one of the pillars of the choral repertoire and a performance is always welcome, not least for the composer's magnificent orchestral score. When Haydn composed it in 1797, the tale it tells, was generally accepted as a gospel, in a manner of speaking; with Darwin and others we have moved on, though that affects the glorious music not at all. Some musical observers have felt that Part 3 (for all its very pretty duetting for Adam and Eve, commented on by the chorus, with just a hint of what is to befall them) is an anti-climax after "Achieved is the Glorious Work", the finest chorus in the work (of many, be it said) and one of the finest in the choral repertoire. It is best, of course, simply to sit back and enjoy Part 3 along with the rest.

And indeed this performance produced a cornucopia of delights. The alert choral singing, urged on by Simon Lindley, surely the finest musician in the North, was full of commitment and excitement, an eager response to the composer's characteristically joyous life-renewing invention. *Creation* is of course, not just a work for chorus. All three of the principal soloists have "hit" arias and they often combine, gorgeously, in ensembles. The soloists on this occasion were Debra Morley, familiar from Choral Society concerts for some years now, who excelled particularly in the two celebrated soprano solos in Part 1, Ben Thapa (tenor), a powerful voice with several operatic successes already to his credit, yet with a lyrical capability suiting "In Nature Worth", and, deputising at scarcely a day's notice, James Gower, another singer with considerable operatic experience, who did well, especially as Adam in Part 3, reminding us that Haydn was in his day no inconsiderable operatic composer. Mr. Gower will be worth keeping an eye on for the future.

As I suggested at the beginning, the orchestra plays a substantial role, sometimes charmingly naïve (as in the pictorialism of the first half), sometimes attractively pointing the vocal argument, and occasionally, as so often with Haydn, innovative, like the overture, "Representation of Chaos". This performance was fortunate in its instrumental support, by the fine, Northern based National Festival Orchestra (leader, Sally Robinson) whose playing had classical style; the many solo opportunities were eagerly accepted. Alan Horsey was the organist.

But above all this was a triumph for Simon Lindley, whose enthusiasm and attention to detail did Haydn proud.

*Orpheus*