



After his second stay in London, in 1795 Haydn returned to Vienna with a baggage full of successes and satisfactions but also of new projects. In fact, the impresario Salomon, considering Haydn the worthy heir of Handel in the oratorio genre, had provided the composer before his departure with a libretto on the creation of the world which Haydn would set to music shortly after, between 1796 and 1798. The oratorio for solos, choir and orchestra *Die Schöpfung (The Creation)* was first performed in private form on 29 April 1798 at Schwarzenberg Palace to be then publicly presented the following year (19 March 1799) at the Teatro di Porta Carinzia, where it was welcomed by a great success. The text of the *Creation*, signed by such a sig. Lidley and translated into German for Haydn by Baron Gottfried van Swieten, is based on three distinct sources: the books of *Genesis* and the *Psalms* of the Bible and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The score is divided into three sections: the first two faithfully follow the narration of *Genesis* and involve the three solo voices of the archangels - Gabriel (soprano), Uriel (tenor) and Raphael (bass) - in the description of the six days in which God out of primordial chaos he created the elements, benevolent nature, the animal world, and finally man. The third and last section is dedicated to the description of the Garden of Eden in which the soprano and bass soloists are called to give voice to Adam and Eve. The recitative interventions of the archangels therefore constitute the leitmotif of a narrative that alternates solo arias and duets of enchanting sound beauty, monumental choral interventions, designed to celebrate the greatness of God and his work, and orchestral episodes describing the elements of nature (light, wind, thunder, rain, sea waves) and fauna (insects, deer, wild animals). An example above all is the initial overture in which Haydn represents the cosmic disorder through continuous modulations and chromatisms that increase the suspense up to the bright and peremptory accord that marks the '*Fiat lux*' announced by the choir.