Sarah Mullins

**Review of The Creation**

**Composed by Franz Josef Haydn**

**Performed by the Knox Choir and Orchestra**

The Creation by Franz Josef Haydn is a beautifully composed symphony based on the creation story in the bible. The symphony itself was performed in a beautiful Presbyterian church that was a mix of traditional in modern with a traditional chapel that had folk inspiration and a recently renovated reception area that connected the church to the modern age. The piece was performed by a full orchestra, a choir including seven soloists and conducted by Earl Rivers. It is unique from other symphonies with its choir and soloist, each representing an angel coming down from heaven to tell the story of God’s creation of the earth. Although Haydn originally wrote the symphony in German, it was performed in English and the text was provided to the audience.

The Creation is a captivating work of art that follows the story of the Christian Creation, it starts with a world plunged into chaos. This is where he draws in the audience with the confusion and discord of competing melodies between the instruments. It resolves itself into a peaceful sound before the orchestra and chorus burst forth with full, rich sounds to symbolize God bringing light to the darkness. The symphony alternates between the chaos and storms of an unformed world and the joyous sounds of the angels singing out about the wonderful work of God. The music mirrors the words with its use of instrumentation, the soft soothing sounds of the strings and woodwinds to simulate an ethereal feeling and the brass to indicate more turmoil with their rich, powerful sounds.

Each soloist who sang the part of an angel brought a unique character. The varying timbres of their voices created a vivid image that angel’s portrayal of the creation story. Each time the vocalist would come in with renewed vigor and passion that translated into evoking emotions in the audience. The choir would accompany them quietly or not at all so as not to draw attention away from the story, the orchestra did so as well. The sounds flowed together in perfect harmonies that accentuated the soothing sounds of the angels. Every note was even more captivating than the last, which helped create the tone of the piece. All of the music was embellished with dramatic flourishes that characterized this piece of work and made it unique from other, more conservative pieces from its time.

Haydn’s symphony is very bold in its approach, it is full of drama and emotions that transport its audience. The musicians showed their passion for the music in their playing and further drew in the audience with their dedication to the portrayal of one of Haydn’s greatest works. When the choir and orchestra was loud and joyful, the audience felt their heart soar with the music. When there was discord and unrest among the instruments, then the audience felt anxious for the music to reach its resolution. When performed in person, the music becomes more than just notes on a page. It is a story of one of the most glorious occurrences in the Christian faith, the creation of the world.