Soloists announced for performance of Haydn's "The Creation"

Tuesday 24 February, 2026

Sheffield music lovers are being promised a spectacular summer evening as Sheffield Chamber Orchestra has announced the three soloists for its forthcoming performance of *The Creation* on **13 June 2026**.

The landmark oratorio by Joseph Haydn will be conducted by John Lyon and performed in collaboration with Sheffield City Choristers, bringing together orchestra, chorus and a distinguished trio of guest soloists.

Taking the soprano role is Claire Lees, a Lancashire-born singer who trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. An alumna of the prestigious Samling Artist Programme and winner of the Wil Keune Mozart Prize, she has appeared at leading venues including Wigmore Hall and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. A member of the Chorus of Opera North, she combines operatic flair with the clarity and poise required for Haydn's luminous writing.

Joining her is Hartlepool-born tenor Tom Smith, who studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music. Smith has performed with Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Welsh National Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and has worked with internationally renowned conductors. An experienced recitalist and oratorio singer, he brings both dramatic presence and lyrical warmth to the role.

Completing the trio is Derbyshire baritone Andrew Randall. A graduate of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Randall has appeared with Opera North and The Grange Festival in a wide range of principal and cover roles. Alongside his performing career, he teaches singing at several schools and sings regularly at Sheffield Cathedral, giving him strong local ties.

Haydn's *The Creation* remains one of the most celebrated choral-orchestral works ever written. First performed in 1798, it depicts the Biblical story of the world's formation, from chaos and darkness to the radiant chorus "And there was light." Its vivid orchestration, dramatic storytelling and joyful final choruses have ensured its place as a cornerstone of the repertoire.

Conductor John Lyon, well known to Sheffield audiences for his energetic and engaging approach, will lead the combined forces in what promises to be a highlight of the city's summer cultural calendar.

Before that, the orchestra turns its attention to its next concert, **Great Classical Masterpieces**, on **21 March 2026**. The programme features Egmont Overture by Ludwig van Beethoven, Violin Concerto No. 1 by Max Bruch performed by Sheffield-born rising star Esme Greenwood, and Symphony No. 2 by Johannes Brahms — a programme of orchestral favourites that showcases the ensemble at full strength.

Further details and ticket information for both concerts are available via the Sheffield Chamber Orchestra website www.SCOrchestra.uk.

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