

**Re:Creation –  
a great spiritual and musical journey**

**WILLIAM DOVE – CHRISTIAN TODAY  
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Re:Creation is a spiritual and musical journey like no other, a modern day libretto consisting of 150 verses taken from the Bible by retired URC minister Derek Wensley and put to music by composer David Perkins in the musical style of oratorios like Handel's "Messiah" and Hadyn's "Creation". The idea? To make the Bible easily accessible in a musical form.

The final product manages to take the audience on a journey which really captures the whole essence of man's existence and his relationship with God from the beginning of time, to the present and even into the future prophesied in Revelations.

Re:Creation consists of five parts which perfectly cover all the main themes in the Bible, starting with God's creation in parts one and two, moving on to the sinfulness of man in part three, Jesus as the saviour of man in part four and the promise of the restored Kingdom as the finale in part five.

The libretto in this respect is a work of genius. The 150 verses chosen to tell the story of God and man throughout eternity come from some unexpected places of the Bible, from books like Jeremiah, Job and the Epistles of St Paul; and they do the job very well, varying in styles from beautiful poetry to theology.

However, by far the greatest achievement of this work is the way the music brings the words on the page (the libretto is printed on the programme) to life. This is all the more impressive when one considers that the composer comes from a non-Christian background. Despite this, one was left with the impression that the composer really understood the meaning of the verses as the music takes you to new levels of understanding.

One of the best parts is near the beginning when the Chorus sings of creation:

"The Earth was formless and void and darkness was over the surface of the deep. The Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said 'let there be light'. And there was light." (Genesis 1:1-3)

The musical accompaniment at the beginning gives a very dark and mournful feeling suggesting the loneliness of God before He had created the universe and the race of man with whom He would share his love.

The chorus then repeats the words "let there be light". At first it's not obvious why, but as they continue, each time getting more confident and louder, one gets the feeling of a struggle to let this light appear. With every repetition it feels that light is getting brighter before a final crescendo in which this bright light shines on the whole creation of God. It is an impressive sequence.

Jeremy White, the solo bass-baritone on loan from the Royal Opera House, gave a very good performance as the Voice of God. His first appearance comes in part three and his first lines are from the book of Jeremiah chiding mankind for turning away from Him (Jeremiah 8:5-7 and Jeremiah 5:21-25). The verses may not, upon first reading, seem like the most attractive but White does a very good job in capturing the felling of the voice of God.

Hearing him sing: "Why then, My people, do you turn away from Me without ever turning back? You cling to your idols and refuse to turn to Me. I listen carefully, but you do not speak the truth. Not one of you has been sorry for his wickedness." One does not feel the force of a terrifying God but rather one feels that these are the words of a fair and fatherly figure who wants to help his children who have made a mess of their lives.

Overall this was a very good performance which gave a good account of the ongoing story of the relationship between man and God. Musically there are some real gems where the composition brings the verses of the Bible to life in a way that gets you thinking.

Perkins and Wensley tested the water with a performance of Re:Creation on Wednesday in central London. They're hoping it sparked an interest in the production within the kind of people who can help take it across the country. They're even hoping Re:Creation can make it onto the line-up of next year's Pentecost Festival. Our final thoughts: it's well worth a try.