



LOUISVILLE
masterchorale

ELIJAH

FELIX MENDELSSOHN



Sunday, October 14, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH



Welcome to the first concert of the Eighth Season of the Louisville Master Chorale! Thanks so much for your support. This season we are pleased to present three magnificent concerts, each full of human drama and inspired music.

- First is *Elijah*, October 14 at Holy Spirit Church. Mendelssohn's masterwork on the life of the Biblical prophet, in an oratorio modelled after Bach and Handel but with the lyricism and use of choral color which reflect his genius as an early Romantic composer.
- Second is our Holiday Magic program on December 9 at the Brown Theater, combining our experienced voices with the remarkable talents of the Louisville Youth Orchestra. We'll have seasonal favorites as well as works from Handel to Shostakovich and more.
- Third is our Celebration of Gershwin, Copland and Bernstein on March 17 in the Comstock Recital Hall, for their extraordinary legacy. In addition to our customary works for chorus and orchestra, we will also feature a performance of *Rhapsody in Blue* with pianist Dror Biran.

We all look forward to sharing this magnificent repertoire with you in this remarkable variety of eras and of venues—from Holy Spirit in St Matthews to the Brown Theater downtown to the Comstock Recital Hall on the University of Louisville campus—and from Biblical times to our lifetimes. We relish the opportunity to bring you the best of many ages as we continue to maintain and enhance this tradition in Louisville.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Walker".

Mark Walker
Artistic Director

FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY: ELIJAH

Jessica Mills - *soprano*

Mary Wilson Redden - *soprano*

Julianne Horton - *alto*

Bill Coleman - *tenor*

Alexander Redden - *bass*

———— 1 INTERVAL ————

Sunday, October 14, 2018

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH
3345 LEXINGTON ROAD, LOUISVILLE, KY

CONDUCTOR & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: **MARK WALKER**

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR: **RICK MOOK**

CONCERTMASTER: **JACK GRIFFIN**



The Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, provides operating support to Louisville Master Chorale with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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PRECONCERT PROGRAM



Dr. John R. Hale is the Director of Liberal Studies and Adjunct Professor of Archaeology at the University of Louisville. Dr. Hale is a graduate of Yale University, with a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, and is both a distinguished instructor and author. His many awards include the Panhellenic Teacher of the Year Award and the Delphi Center Award.

Professor Hale has published reports on his research in *Antiquity*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, *Scientific American*, and other journals; and his fieldwork has been featured in documentaries on the Discovery and History channels. When his first book, *Lords of the Sea: The Epic Story of the Athenian Navy and the Birth of Democracy*, was published in 2009, *The New York Times* reviewer called him “an intellectually serious historian who knows how to tell war stories.” His engaging style and commanding knowledge are appreciated by concertgoers throughout our community.

THE ENGLISH TEXT:

ELIJAH BY FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Mendelssohn and Schubring used Luther's German translation of the Bible. The English Version of the text is by William Bartholomew, with adjustments to either text or music by Mendelssohn.

PART I

Introduction: *Elijah*

As God the Lord of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. (1st Kings 17:1)

OVERTURE

No. 1: *Chorus (the People)*

Help, Lord! Wilt Thou quite destroy us? The harvest now is over, the summer days are gone, and yet no power cometh to help us! (Jeremiah 8:20) Will then the Lord be no more God in Zion? (Jeremiah 8:19)

No. 3: *Recitative (Obadiah)*

Ye people, rend your hearts, and not your garments, for your transgressions, even as Elijah hath sealed the heavens through the word of God. I therefore say to ye, forsake your idols, return to God; for He is slow to anger, and merciful, and kind, and gracious, and repenteth Him of the evil. (Joel 2:12–13)

No. 4: *Aria (Obadiah)*

“If with all your hearts ye truly seek me, ye shall ever surely find me,” thus saith our God. (Deuteronomy 4:29; Jeremiah 29:13) Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might even come before His presence! (Job 23:3)

No. 5: *Chorus (the People)*

Yet doth the Lord see it not; He mocketh at us! His curse hath fallen down upon us. His wrath will pursue us till He destroy us! (Deuteronomy 28:15) For He, the Lord our God, He is a jealous God, and He visiteth all the fathers' sins on the children to the third and the fourth generation of them that hate Him. His mercies on thousands fall, fall on all them that love Him and keep His commandments. (Exodus 20:5-6)

No. 6: *Recitative (an Angel)*

Elijah! Get thee hence, Elijah! Depart and turn thee eastward: thither hide thee by Cherith's brook. There shalt thou drink its waters; and the Lord thy God hath commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So do according unto His word. (1st Kings 17:3-4)

No. 7: *Double Chorus (Angels)*

For He shall give His angels charge over thee, that they shall protect thee in all the ways thou goest; that their hands shall uphold and guide thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Psalm 91:11-12)

Recitative (an Angel)

Now Cherith's brook is dried up, Elijah. (1st Kings 7:7) Arise and depart, and get thee to Zarephath. Thither abide; for the Lord hath commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. (1st Kings 7:9) And the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. (1st Kings 7:14)

No. 8: *Recitative, Air, and Duet (The Widow; Elijah)*

The Widow:

What have I to do with thee, O man of God? Art thou come to me, to call my sin unto remembrance? To slay my son art thou come hither? Help me, man of God, my son is sick, and his sickness is so sore that there is no breath left in him! I go mourning all the day long, I lie down and weep at night! See mine affliction, be thou the orphan's helper.

Elijah:

Give me thy son! Turn unto her, O Lord, my God; in mercy help this widow's son. For Thou art gracious, and full of compassion, and plenteous in mercy and truth. Lord, my God, let the spirit of this child return that he again may live!

The Widow:

Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? There is no breath in him.

Elijah:

Lord, my God, let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!

The Widow:

Shall the dead arise and praise Thee?

Elijah:

Lord, my God, O let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!

The Widow:

The Lord hath heard thy prayer, the soul of my son reviveth!

Elijah:

Now behold, thy son liveth!

The Widow:

Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that His word in thy mouth is the truth. What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?

Elijah:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, love Him with all thine heart, and ...

Elijah and Widow:

... with all thy/my soul and with all thy/my might. O blessed are they who fear Him! (1st Kings 17:17-24; echoes of Psalms 38; 6; 10; 136; 138; 128; Deuteronomy 6:5 [cf. Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; and Luke 10:27])

No. 10 *Recitative and Chorus*

Elijah:

As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth, before whom I stand, three years this day fulfilled, I will shew myself unto Ahab, and the Lord will then send rain again upon the earth.

King Ahab:

Art thou Elijah, he that troubleth Israel?

Chorus:

Thou art Elijah, he that troubleth Israel!

Elijah:

I never troubled Israel's peace. It is thou, Ahab, and all thy father's house. Ye have forsaken God's commands, and thou hast followed Baalim! Now send and gather to me the whole of Israel unto Mount Carmel. There summon the prophets of Baal, and also the prophets of the groves, who are feasted at Jezebel's table. Then, then we shall see whose God is God the Lord.

Chorus:

And then we shall see whose God is God the Lord.

Elijah:

Rise then, ye priests of Baal; select and slay a bullock, and put no fire under it; uplift your voices and call the god ye worship; and I then will call on the Lord Jehovah. And the god who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

Chorus:

Yea, and the god who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

Elijah:

Call first upon your god, your numbers are many. I, even I only remain one prophet of the Lord. Invoke your forest gods, and mountain deities. (1st Kings 18:1, 15, 17-19, 23-25)

No. 11: *Chorus (the Priests of Baal)*

Baal, we cry to thee, hear and answer us! Heed the sacrifice we offer! Baal, o hear us and answer us! (1st Kings 18:26)

No. 12: *Recitative and Chorus (Elijah; the Priests of Baal)*

Elijah:

Call him louder! For he is a god. He talketh, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth. So awaken him. Call him louder!

Priests of Baal:

Hear our cry, O Baal! Now arise! Wherefore slumber? (1st Kings 18:26-27)

No. 13: *Recitative and Chorus*

Elijah:

Call him louder! He heareth not. With knives and lancets cut yourselves after your manner. Leap upon the altar ye have made. Call him and prophesy. Not a voice will answer you; none will listen; none heed you.

Priests of Baal:

Baal! Hear and answer, Baal! Mark how the scorner derideth us! Hear and answer! (1st Kings 18:26)

No. 14: *Recitative and Aria (Elijah)*

Elijah:

Draw near all ye people, come to me! (1st Kings 18:26-30)

Aria

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, this day let it be known that Thou art God and I am Thy servant! Lord God of Abraham! O shew to all this people that I have done these things according to Thy word. O hear me, Lord, and answer me! Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, O hear me and answer me; and shew this people that Thou art Lord God, and let their hearts again be turned! (1st Kings 18:36-37)

No. 16: *Recitative and Chorus (Elijah; the People)*

Elijah:

O Thou who maketh Thine angels spirits; Thou, whose ministers are flaming fires, let them now descend!

The People:

The fire descends from heaven! The flames consume his offering! Before Him upon your faces fall! The Lord is God. O Israel hear! Our God is one Lord, and we will have no other gods before the Lord.

Elijah:

Take all the prophets of Baal, and let not one of them escape you. Bring them down to Kishon's brook, and there let them be slain.

The People:

Take all the prophets of Baal, and let not one of them escape us. Bring all, and slay them! (1st Kings 18:38-40)

No. 17 *Aria (Elijah)*

Elijah:

Is not His word like a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock into pieces? For God is angry with the wicked every day. And if the wicked turn not, the Lord will whet His sword; and He hath bent His bow, and made it ready! (Jeremiah 23:29; Psalm 7:11-12)

No. 19 Recitative and Chorus (Elijah, the People, the Boy)

Elijah:

O Lord, Thou hast overthrown Thine enemies and destroyed them. Look down on us from heaven, O Lord; regard the distress of Thy people! Open the heavens and send us relief; help Thy servant now, O God!

The People:

Open the heavens and send us relief; help Thy servant now, O God!

Elijah:

Go up now, child, and look toward the sea. Hath my prayer been heard by the Lord?

The Boy:

There is nothing. The heavens are as brass above me.

Elijah:

When the heavens are closed up because they have sinned against Thee, yet, if they pray and confess Thy name, and turn from their sin when Thou dost afflict them, then hear from heaven and forgive the sin. Help, send Thy servant help, O God!

The People:

Then hear from heaven and forgive the sin! Help, send Thy servant help, O God!

Elijah:

Go up again, and still look toward the sea.

The Boy:

There is nothing. The earth is as iron under me.

Elijah:

Hearst thou no sound of rain? Seest thou nothing arise from the deep?

The Boy:

No, there is nothing.

Elijah:

Have respect to the prayer of Thy servant, O Lord my God! Unto Thee will I cry, Lord my rock. Be not silent to me; and Thy great mercies remember, Lord.

The Boy:

Behold, a little cloud ariseth now from the waters: it is like a man's hand! The heavens are black with clouds and wind; the storm rusheth louder and louder!

The People:

Thanks be to God for all His mercies!

Elijah:

Thanks be to God, for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth forevermore! (Jeremiah 14:22; 2nd Chronicles 6:19, 26-27; Deuteronomy 28:23; Psalm 28:1; 1st Kings 18:43-45)

No. 20 Chorus

Thanks be to God, He laveth the thirsty land. The waters gather, they rush along! They are lifting their voices! The stormy billows are high; their fury is mighty. But the Lord is above them, and Almighty. (Psalm 93:3-4)

PART II

No. 21 Aria (Soprano)

Hear ye, Israel; hear what the Lord speaketh: "Oh, hadst thou heeded my commandments!" Who hath believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him oppressed by tyrants, thus saith the Lord: "I am He that comforteth; be not afraid, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee. Say, who art thou, that thou art afraid of a man that shall die, and forgettest the Lord thy maker, who hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the earth's foundations? Be not afraid, for I, thy God, will strengthen thee." (Isaiah 48:1,18; 53:1; 49:7; 41:10; 51:12-13)

No. 23 Recitative and Chorus (Elijah; the Queen; the People)

Elijah:

The Lord hath exalted thee from among the people, and o'er His people Israel hath made thee King. But thou, Ahab, hast done evil to provoke Him to anger above all that were before thee; as if it had been a light thing for thee to walk in the sins of Jeroboam. Thou hast made a grove, and an altar to Baal, and served him and worshipped him. Thou hast killed the righteous, and also taken possession. And the Lord shall smite all Israel as a reed is shaken in the water, and He shall give Israel up, and thou shalt know He is the Lord. (1st Kings 14:7, 9, 15; 16:30-33)

The Queen:

Have ye not heard he hath prophesied against all Israel?

Chorus:

We heard it with our ears.

The Queen:

Hath he not prophesied also against the king of Israel?

Chorus:

We heard it with our ears.

The Queen:

And why hath he spoken in the name of the Lord? Doth Ahab govern the kingdom of Israel, while Elijah's power is greater than the king's? The gods do so to me and more, if by tomorrow about this time, I make not his life as the life of one of them whom he hath sacrificed at the brook of Kishon!

Chorus:

He shall perish!

The Queen:

Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets?

Chorus:
He shall perish!

The Queen:
Yea, by sword he destroyed them all!

Chorus:
He destroyed them all!

The Queen:
He also closed the heavens.

Chorus:
He also closed the heavens.

The Queen:
And called down a famine upon the land.

Chorus:
And called down a famine upon the land.

The Queen:
So go ye forth, and seize Elijah, for he is worthy to die. Slaughter him! Do unto him as he hath done!

No. 24: Chorus

Woe to him! He shall perish, for he closed the heavens. And why hath he spoken in the name of the Lord? Let the guilty prophet perish! He hath spoken falsely against our land and us, as we have heard with our ears. So go ye forth, seize on him! He shall die! (Jeremiah 26:9, 11; 1st Kings 19:2; 21:7; Ecclesiasticus [Sirach] 48:2-3)

No. 26: Aria (Elijah)

It is enough! O Lord, now take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers. I desire to live no longer. Now let me die, for my days are but vanity. I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, for the children of Israel have broken Thy covenant, and thrown down Thine altars, and slain all Thy prophets, slain them with the sword. And I, even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away! (Job 7:16; 1st Kings 19:10)

No. 27: Recitative (A Voice)

See now, he sleepeth beneath a juniper tree in the wilderness, and there the angel of the Lord encampeth round about all them that fear him. (1st Kings 19:5; Psalm 34:7)

No. 28: Trio (Angels)

Lift thine eyes, O lift thine eyes to the mountains, whence cometh help. Thy help cometh from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He hath said, thy foot shall not be moved. Thy keeper will never slumber. (Psalm 121:1, 3)

No. 29: Chorus (Angels)

He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps. Shouldst thou, walking in grief, languish, He will quicken thee. (Psalms 121:4; 138:7)

No. 33: Recitative (Elijah; the Angel)

Elijah:

Night falleth round me, O Lord! Be Thou not far from me! Hide not Thy face, O Lord, from me; my soul is thirsting for Thee, as a thirsty land.

The Angel:

Arise now, get thee without, stand on the mount before the Lord; for there His glory will appear and shine on thee! Thy face must be veiled, for He draweth near. (Psalm 143:6-7; 1st Kings 19:11)

No. 34: Chorus

Behold, God the Lord passed by! And a mighty wind rent the mountains around, brake in pieces the rocks, brake them before the Lord. But yet the Lord was not in the tempest.

Behold, God the Lord passed by! And the sea was upheaved, and the earth was shaken. But yet the Lord was not in the earthquake.

And after the earthquake there came a fire. But yet the Lord was not in the fire.

And after the fire there came a still, small voice: And in that still voice onward came the Lord. (1st Kings 19:11-12)

No. 37: Arioso (Elijah)

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but Thy kindness shall not depart from me; neither shall the covenant of Thy peace be removed. (Isaiah 54:10)

No. 38: Chorus

Then did Elijah the prophet break forth like a fire; his words appeared like burning torches. Mighty kings by him were overthrown. He stood on the mount of Sinai and heard the judgements of the future, and in Horeb its vengeance. And when the Lord would take him away to heaven, lo, there came a fiery chariot with fiery horses, and he went by a whirlwind to heaven. (Ecclesiasticus [Sirach] 48:1, 6-7; 2nd Kings 2:1, 11)

No. 39: Aria (Tenor)

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in their heavenly Father's realm. Joy on their head shall be for everlasting, and all sorrow and mourning shall flee away forever. (Matthew 13:43; Isaiah 51:11)

No. 40: Recitative (A Voice)

Behold, God hath sent Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children unto their fathers, lest the Lord shall come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6)

No. 42: Final Chorus

And then, then shall your light break forth as the light of morning breaketh, and your health shall speedily spring forth then. And the glory of the Lord ever shall reward you. Lord, our Creator, how excellent Thy name is in all the nations, Thou fillest heaven with Thy glory. Amen! (Isaiah 58:8; Psalm 8:1)

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ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP



MARK WALKER, Louisville Master Chorale's Conductor and Artistic Director, has extensive experience in Choral Conducting, Organ Performance, Choral Music Education, and Liturgical Church Music. He currently serves as Organist and Director of Music at Church of the Holy Spirit in Louisville. He has served parishes in Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, and North Carolina and has taught in schools in Kentucky and North Carolina. Walker previously served as Assistant Conductor for the Louisville Bach Society. Walker holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music from Western Kentucky University and a Master's Degree in Organ Performance from East Carolina University.

His conducting experience with extended choral-orchestral works includes compositions by Bach, Handel, Mozart, Vivaldi, Pergolesi and contemporary composers Rutter and Lauridsen. As an organ recitalist, Walker has performed extensively throughout the Eastern and Southern U.S. He regularly serves as conductor and organist for various Diocesan events in Louisville, and during the summer of 2011 served as both choral conductor and guest organ recitalist for the National Associations of Pastoral Musicians Conference. He also served as Dean of the Louisville Chapter of the American Guild of Organists in 2011-12.

DR. RICK MOOK, Louisville Master Chorale's Assistant Conductor, has two decades of scholarship and performance. He has engaged a wide range of musical repertoires, from renaissance motets, *fin-de-siecle* choral-orchestral works, jubilee and gospel quartet styles to Hip-hop turntablism. He holds a BA in Music and Religion from the University of Rochester, where he studied conducting, vocal performance, and bassoon at the Eastman School of Music under the guidance of Dr. David Harman, Dr. William Weinert, and Dr. Thomas Folan. He then earned a Ph.D. in Music History at the University of Pennsylvania and served on the faculty of the Herberger School of Music at Arizona State University for over 9 years.



JACK GRIFFIN is Concertmaster and Production Manager with the Louisville Master Chorale. He has held the Principal Viola position with the Louisville Orchestra since 1984, having joined the Orchestra during high school. He received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Louisville and has also studied at The Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and Indiana University.

Griffin owns Commonwealth Musicians which provides ensembles such as string quartets, jazz ensembles and other musicians for functions such as weddings and corporate events.

LOUISVILLE MASTER CHORALE

SOPRANO

Donya Clark
Sarah Clay
Conra Cowart
Marilyn Cross
Laura Lea Duckworth
Jessica Mills
Nancy Morris
Jenny Patterson
Vicky Perry
Randy Peters
Miriam Pittenger
Mary Redden
Stephanie Smith
Diane Watkins
Maria Whitley
Ruth Wright

ALTO

Nancy Appelhof
Theresa Bauer
Anne-Karrick Deetsch
Carole Dunn
Barbara Ellis
Jeanne Marie Groene
Julianna Horton
Carolyn Makk
Julie Nichelson
Nancy Nikfarjam
Linda Osavsky
Kathleen Regneri
Marsha Roberts
Sheila Steinman
Wallace
Elizabeth Weaver

TENOR

Alex Brackett
Rob Carlson
Bill Coleman
Millard Dunn
Jackson Harmeyer
Sean McKinley
Troy Overton
Allan Ramirez
Gregg Rochman
Jonathan Smith
Wesley Thomas
Claude Wise

BASS

Louie Bailey
John Hale
Fred Klotter
Rob Lane
Richard Mook
John O'Neil
Laurence Pittenger
Alex Redden
Bill Schauf
Lewis Washington



JESSICA MILLS, *soprano*, studied voice at Indiana University Bloomington, and received a Bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Bellarmine University. In 2016, she graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Master's of music education in choral conducting. She has appeared as a soloist with many Louisville arts ensembles, including the Bellarmine Oratorio society, the Louisville Master Chorale, and the Louisville Vocal Project. She is currently the Director of Music Ministry at St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic church in Louisville, KY.



MARY WILSON-REDDEN, *soprano*, has been a featured performer in the Louisville area for over 20 years. In addition to serving as resident soloist with the Louisville Bach Society, she has performed with groups including the Louisville Youth Choir, the Bellarmine Schola Cantorum, Kentucky Opera and the Louisville Chorus. She has toured internationally with the Stephen Foster Story and the Louisville Vocal Project. A graduate of Western Kentucky University with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Performance, she is a soloist with the Choir of Calvary Episcopal Church.



JULIANNA HORTON, *alto*, is Minister of Music at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in LaGrange, Kentucky. Ms. Horton holds music degrees from Indiana University in Bloomington and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, as well as a Diploma in Pastoral Liturgy from St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana. An active organist, pianist, violinist, conductor, and composer, Ms. Horton sang with the Louisville Choral Arts Society for six years. Her vocal coaches have included Allison Smith, Michael Lancaster, Deborah Dierks, and Laura Lea Duckworth.



BILL COLEMAN, *tenor*, has performed extensively in the Louisville area in a variety of ensembles including the Cardinal Singers, the Choral Arts Society, the Louisville Bach Society, and the Louisville Chorus. Highlights include performances as soloist in Mozart's Requiem and Schubert's Mass in C with the University of Louisville Honor Choir, Bach's St. Matthew Passion, B-Minor Mass and Monteverdi's Vespers with the Choral Arts Society of Louisville, and Boccherini's Stabat Mater with Louisville's period instrument ensemble Bourbon Baroque. He attended the University of Louisville.



ALEXANDER REDDEN, *bass*, is a veteran soloist in and around the greater Louisville area. He has been featured as a soloist with the Louisville Bach Society, Kentucky Opera, Louisville Vocal Project, Louisville Chorus, Louisville Youth Choir, Bellarmine University, the Youth Performing Arts School Choirs, Calvary Episcopal Church and the Stephen Foster Story. He toured Italy with the Louisville Vocal Project, performing concerts in many historic venues including St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. He holds a Bachelors Degree in Music from Western Kentucky University.

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

Jack Griffin
Heather Thomas
Elizabeth Smith
Becca Neeley

CELLO

Yoonie Choi

CLARINET

Andrea Levine
Marilyn Nije

TRUMPETS

Jerome Amend
Erika Howard

VIOLIN 2

Annie Daigle
Elisa Spalding
Betsy Osoffsky

BASS

Patti Docs

BASSOON

Matthew Karr
Chris Reid

TIMPANI

Michael Launius

FLUTE

Kathy Karr
Jana Flygstad

HORN

John Gustley
Diana Morgen

VIOLA

Evan Vivic
Jennifer Shackleton

OBOE

Jennifer Potochnic
Katherine Alberts

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PROGRAM NOTES

Felix Mendelssohn's paternal grandfather was Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), a prominent Jewish philosopher whose writings on religious tolerance were influential throughout Europe during the Enlightenment. His maternal great grandfather, Daniel Itzig (1723-1799), was Frederick the Great's court banker. Daniel Itzig was wealthy and Moses Mendelssohn famous. The children and grandchildren in both families were privileged and well-educated. Music was important in the lives of almost all of Felix's relatives, and so it is not surprising that he, his brother, and their sisters began their musical education when they were very young. Abraham (1776-1835) was the fifth of Moses Mendelssohn's six children. Lea Saloman (1777-1842) was the daughter of Daniel Itzig's oldest child. Abraham and Lea married on December 26, 1804. Of their four children (Fanny [1805-1847], Felix [1809-1847], Rebecka [1811-1858], and Paul [1812-1874]) the ones who showed the earliest signs of extraordinary musical talent were Fanny and Felix. The idea of a career in music for Fanny was never taken seriously by her parents, though in fact she did become an accomplished pianist and composer. Their parents, on the other hand, did encourage Felix to follow a career in music, and his early talent was compared favorably, in his own lifetime, to that of Mozart. Abraham began to refer to himself as the son of his [famous] father who has become the father of his [famous] son. And late in their short lives, Felix did support Fanny's attempts to publish her own compositions. (Fanny was 41 years old when she died, 5 months and 21 days before Felix died. He was 38. Music had kept brother and sister particularly close. He called her his "Minerva, his Thomaskantor with the dark eyebrows." He wrote of her, "With her kindness and love she was part of myself every moment of my life. There was no joy I experienced without thinking of the joy that she would feel with me.")

But even the lives of privileged Jews were constrained by the laws and practices of 18th and 19th century German states. Consequently, conversion to Christianity was tempting, and on March 21, 1816, Abraham and Lea Mendelssohn had their four children baptized by a Reformed Protestant minister. Fanny was 10, Felix 7, Rebecka 4 and Paul 3 years old. They added Bartholdy to their names, adopting the surname Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and they grew up Lutheran. Their parents converted to Christianity six years later, in October, 1722, and at that time added Bartholdy to their surnames. The name Bartholdy was recommended by Lea's older brother, who had taken the name from a property his family owned at the time he converted to Christianity.

Abraham Mendelssohn-Bartholdy loved opera, and encouraged the young Felix to take an interest in musical drama. According to his biographer R. Larry Todd, by the time he was twelve Felix had "obliged by writing small-scale dramatic pieces and two substantial Singspiele." He was, however, never to write a completed, full-scale, mature opera. On the other hand, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's approach to Oratorio was clearly more

dramatic than it was narrative. In all of the 31 movements we will sing from *Elijah* there are only 4 that serve a primarily narrative purpose (Numbers 27, 34, 38, and 40).

R. Larry Todd points out that we know a great deal more now about Mendelssohn's life, his personality, and his music due to "a staggering amount of primary source material, encompassing autograph manuscripts, sketches, diaries, letters, paintings, drawings, accounts, Mendelssohn's honeymoon diary, his school notebooks, his assessments of students in the Leipzig Conservatory, not to mention the sketches and autograph drafts of his major works, and documents revealing the evolution of the libretti of his oratorios."

There are many accounts of his prodigious memory and generous personality that have approached the legendary. According to Sir Charles Hallé (1819-1895), founder of the Royal Manchester College of Music and whose autobiography was published by his son and daughter in 1896, "It is well known that when [Mendelssohn] revived Bach's 'Passion Music' and conducted the first performance of that immortal work after it had been dormant for about a century, he found, stepping to the conductor's desk, that a score similar in binding and thickness, but of another work, had been brought by mistake. He conducted this amazingly complicated work by heart, turning leaf after leaf of the book he had before him, in order not to create any feeling of uneasiness on the part of the executants."

In March of 1840, Liszt visited Mendelssohn's home for the first time. One of the musicians who was there recounted that Liszt announced "he had prepared something special for Mendelssohn. He sat down at the piano and played first a Hungarian folk song and then three or four Variations on it, one more incredible than the other, all the while swinging to and fro on the piano bench...Liszt approached [Mendelssohn] saying that now it was his turn, [Mendelssohn] burst out laughing and replied that he wasn't going to play, surely not tonight. Liszt wouldn't take no for an answer, and after some back and forth Mendelssohn said, 'Well, I will play but you must not get angry with me.' So saying, he sat down at the piano and played —what? First the Hungarian folk song and then all the Variations, reproducing them so accurately that only Liszt himself might have discerned a difference. We all were afraid lest Liszt might feel a little peeved, because Mendelssohn, like a real prankster, couldn't prevent himself from imitating Liszt's grandiose movements and extravagant gestures. But Liszt laughed [and] applauded enthusiastically..."

And a letter Mendelssohn wrote in response to a letter he received shortly before the premier performance of *Elijah* (Wednesday, August 6, 1846) demonstrates his selfless generosity. The letter was from Joseph Moore (1766-1851) of the Birmingham Festival Committee, telling Mendelssohn that "Nearly the whole of the Philharmonic band are engaged; a few only are left out who made themselves unpleasant when you were there." Mendelssohn wrote immediately to his close friend Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870),

conductor-in-chief of the Birmingham festival: "I strongly object to this restriction; and as I fancy you can exercise your authority in the matter, I address my protest to you... There is nothing I hate more than the reviving of bygone disputes; it is bad enough that they should have occurred...If men are to be rejected because they are incompetent, that is not my business...but if it is because 'they made themselves unpleasant when I was there,' I consider that an injustice, against which I protest. Any further disturbance on the part of these gentlemen, I am sure, is not to be feared...So you will sincerely oblige me by having the selection made exactly as if I were not coming to England. The only consideration that can be shown me is not to take me into consideration at all." We don't know how or why the musicians in question "made themselves unpleasant" when Mendelssohn was there. It's possible that it involved antisemitism. But as he does time and time again in his music, Mendelssohn here refuses to compromise with his own sense of what is right and true.

Mendelssohn's first fully realized oratorio was *St. Paul* (German *Paulus*), which he premiered at the Lower Rhine Music Festival on May 22, 1836. The performance was a success though Mendelssohn's triumph was muted by the recent death of his father. Felix premiered a much revised version in Leipzig, in March of 1837. According to biographer R. Larry Todd, "Paulus became Felix's most popular work during his lifetime, a favorite of music festivals and oratorio societies that reverberated throughout Germany, and in Denmark, Holland, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and even the United States."

But as *Paulus* was travelling around the world, Mendelssohn was already thinking about another oratorio. In August of 1836 he wrote to his friend and confidant Karl Klingemann, "...what a far greater favour you would confer upon me if, instead of doing so much for my old oratorio, you would write me a new one." And later in the same letter, "If you would only give all the care and thought you now bestow upon 'St. Paul' to an 'Elijah,' or a 'St. Peter,' or even an 'Og of Bashan!'"

Klingemann and Mendelssohn worked out a sketch of an *Elijah*, and in their correspondence they discussed possibilities for the work. But by 1838 Klingemann seems to have lost interest in the project. Mendelssohn then showed the sketch of *Elijah* to Julius Schubring (1806-1899), a theologian, pastor, and friend who had contributed to the libretto of *Paulus*. It was to Schubring that Mendelssohn wrote his famous comment that he saw Elijah "as a thorough prophet, such as we might again require in our own day—energetic and zealous, but also stern, wrathful, and gloomy; a striking contrast to the court rabble and popular rabble—in fact, in opposition to the whole world, and yet borne on angels' wings."

But then *Elijah* drops almost completely out of Mendelssohn's correspondence with both Klingemann and Schubring. Until, in June of 1845, the Birmingham Festival Committee

invited Mendelssohn to conduct the 1846 festival and asked that he "consider whether he can provide a new oratorio, or other music, for the occasion." He could indeed.

Together, he and Schubring came up with a libretto, drawing passages from Luther's translation of the Old and New Testament. Their libretto was in German, but since the oratorio was to premier in Birmingham Mendelssohn needed a text in English. He turned to another friend, a man he called his "translator *par excellence*." On May 23, 1846, Mendelssohn sent William Bartholomew his and Schubring's German libretto of Part I of *Elijah*. A month later Bartholomew had completed an English paraphrase, which he had kept "as *scriptural* as possible." A lively correspondence followed. Felix sent Bartholomew Part II, piece by piece as he finished them. Bartholomew would send back English, and Felix would respond with suggestions and corrections. In his detailed study of *The History of Mendelssohn's Oratorio 'Elijah'* (London, 1896), Frederick George Edwards reports that "Both were unsparing in the labour they bestowed upon the translation." He bases his comments about the history of the translation on correspondence, in English, between Mendelssohn and Bartholomew (and adds in a footnote: "With two exceptions, the letters from Mendelssohn to Bartholomew quoted in this 'History' are now in my possession"). The letters make clear that "Mendelssohn went through the English version bar by bar, note by note, syllable by syllable, with an attention to detail which might be termed microscopic." Several times Mendelssohn suggests changes in the English wording, and at other times would rather alter the notes than change the words.

The story of *Elijah*, the plot, comes from the 1st and 2nd Book of Kings. But Mendelssohn, Schubring, and Bartholomew use text from several books of the Old Testament and one from the New Testament heighten the drama and the meaning of the piece. Ahab is king of Israel, he has married Jezebel, a worshipper of the fertility god Baal (fertility specifically connected to water), and the Israelites have become worshippers of Baal themselves. Elijah is the prophet who must bring them back to the Lord God of Abraham.

Traditionally (i.e. Handel and Haydn) an oratorio begins with an overture. Mendelssohn and Schubring decide instead to plunge into the story by beginning with Elijah's message that a curse, a dreadful drought (no rain, not even dew), will fall on the land of Israel because of the people's worship of Baal. This opening recitative introduces two musical motifs that will recur throughout the oratorio: a rising triad (in this case d minor, sung by Elijah on the words "As God the Lord") followed by a series of falling tritones (a chord made up of 3 whole steps, neither a perfect fourth or a perfect fifth, the "diabolus in musica"), first in the voice and woodwinds and followed ominously by the brass. Then, without pause, the overture begins. The first chorus (No. 1) seems to be part of the overture. In the score the whole notes in the last measure of the overture are tied over to the first notes of the chorus.

Because of the length of the oratorio we have chosen to shorten our performance in order to focus on the most intense, dramatic, and significant movements of the work. Our first cut comes at the beginning of the Overture, though you will hear the closing measures of the Overture that bring us to the powerful opening chorus: the people's cry for help.

In keeping with the dramatic nature of the oratorio there is very little narration. Every singer provides the voice of a character in the drama. And the chorus gets to play several roles: the People of Israel, Angels, and the Priests of Baal.

The drama can be divided into several dramatic scenes. First there's the famine and the suffering that it causes (Nos. 1 – 5). The second scene takes place between Elijah and a widow whose son has died (Nos. 6 – 9). The third scene is the dramatic climax of Part I: Elijah confronts King Ahab and challenges the Priests of Baal to a contest (Nos. 10 – 18). And Part I concludes with the lifting of the drought (Nos. 19 and 20). Movement No. 20 ends Part I with a triumphant chorus of thanksgiving and praise.

Part II opens with a text from Isaiah. One effect of this choice is to suggest a connection between Elijah and Isaiah's Messianic prophecy, interpreted by Christians (and supported by the text of Handel's *Messiah*, which Mendelssohn knew well) as a reference to Jesus. But in No. 23 Jezebel goes on the attack. Among her accusations is that Elijah "closed the heavens...and called down a famine upon the land." She demands that Elijah be executed. In No. 24 a chorus of the people agree with her and turn on Elijah. Elijah flees into the wilderness. Angels comfort him and this leads Mendelssohn to two of the most moving and best-known choruses from *Elijah*: No. 28, "Lift thine eyes..." and No. 29, "He, watching over Israe..." No. 34 is a powerful chorus that creates Elijah's vision of God, not in the whirlwind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire..."

Part II ends with Elijah being carried away to heaven in "a fiery chariot with fiery horses" and with a final triumphant chorus: No. 42, "Then shall your light break forth as the light of morning breaketh!"

As the body of Mendelssohn lay on his deathbed, Fanny's husband William Hensel [1794-1861] drew a pencil sketch of his brother-in-law's peaceful face and at the bottom of the sketch put the last line from Elijah No. 34: "And after the fire there came a still small voice, and in that still voice, onward came the Lord."

Program notes by Millard Dunn.

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