



Tring Choral Society



Conductor: Colin Stevens



Mendelssohn *Elijah*

SOLOISTS

Jeni Bern (Soprano)
Gaynor Keeble (Mezzo-soprano)
Robert Johnston (Tenor)
Jimmy Holliday (Bass)
Elizabeth Brown (Child)

Chiltern Orchestral Society
Leader: Janet Hicks

Saturday 4 July 2015 at 7.30pm

Registered Charity No. 276980



The Soloists



JENI BERN (SOPRANO); As an accomplished oratorio and concert artist, Jeni is in demand with leading conductors and choral societies throughout the UK and Europe. Highlights include Teixeira's Te Deum at Macau International Music Festival with Harry Christophers and the Sixteen; Cupid in Purcell's King Arthur with Paul McCreesh and the Gabrieli Consort at the Bergen Festival; with The Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Sir Neville Marriner Mozart Requiem, also Haydn's The Creation for The Three Cultures International Festival Murcia, Spain; Messiah with Sir David Wilcox and the Bach Choir; Messiah and Finzi's Dies Natalies with the St Gallen Bachchor; and with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra Carmina Burana and Mozart's Exsultate Jubilate. World premieres include Michael Torke's Book of Proverbs at the Festival with the RSNO and Marin Alsop and for De Doelen, Rotterdam Vivaldi's Dixit Dominus and Teutile in Vivaldi's Motezuma

Jeni has appeared with the Dutch Radio Symphony Orchestra as Anne Truelove in the television series Of Beauty and Consolation. Radio appearances included BBC Radio 2's iconic Friday Night is Music Night and broadcasts for BBC Radios 3 & 4. Her CD Let the Bright Seraphim with Baroque trumpeter Crispian Steele-Perkins (Carlton Classics) received considerable critical acclaim. Other recordings include Haydn's Stabat Mater with Christ Church Cathedral Choir (Griffin) and Edward Joseph Collins' Hymn to the Earth with the RSNO and Marin Alsop.

Jeni also features on the soundtracks of several films including the award-winning Cashback and the BBC production of Daniel Deronda

Recent engagements include Wogeleinde "Das Rheingold" Opera North; Casilda "The Gondoliers" G&S Co. Buxton; Wogeleinde "Der Ring des Nibelungen"



(cover) ROH; Dona Nobis Pacem - Vaughan Williams, Wells Cathedral; Beethoven 9th Symphony, Leeds and a critically acclaimed recording of Handel's "Acis and Galatea" arr. Mendelssohn with Christchurch Cathedral Choir Oxford

Future plans include Elle "La Voix humain" (cover) Opera North; Mater Gloriosa "Mahler Symphony No.8 " at the Royal Festival Hall with the New London Orchestra and a return to Tytania " A Midsummer Night's Dream" for Opera North



The Soloists



GAYNOR KEEBLE (MEZZO-SOPRANO) won scholarships to the University of Warwick and the Royal Academy of Music. She was awarded a Countess of Munster Award and has been a semi-finalist in both the Kathleen Ferrier and the Belvedere International Opera Competition.

On leaving the RAM she joined the Welsh National Opera where she performed and covered many roles including. She has since worked with English National Opera, d'Oyly Carte Opera, the Royal Opera, Opera North, Mid-Wales Opera, European Chamber Opera, Opera Project, English Touring Opera, Longborough Festival Opera and Opera Interludes.

Her numerous recordings include Councillor's Wife (Osud) conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras (EMI), Hebe (HMS Pinafore), Patience, Yeomen of the Guard for TER Records,

For orchestras such as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, London Bach

Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia, The Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic and the Vivaldi Concertante, Gaynor's concert repertoire includes Verdi Requiem, Mozart Requiem, Elijah, Dream of Gerontius and Vivaldi Gloria.

She is director of Opera d'Amore



ROBERT JOHNSTON (TENOR) started his singing career as a treble in Salisbury Cathedral Choir and went on to study singing at The Royal Academy of Music, where he was awarded LRAMs in Singing and the Teaching of Singing, as well as a GRSM III honours degree in Music. He was awarded an ARAM by Sir David Lumsden in 1995 for services to the profession.

Robert has been much in demand as a solo singer and consort singer since leaving The Royal Academy of Music. He was a Vicar-Choral in the choir of St Paul's Cathedral from 1989 – 1997, making many

recordings as well as performing regularly in concerts and services. He appeared as a member of The Tallis Scholars from 1990 – 1996, performing in over 300 concerts worldwide and recording extensively on TV, Radio and CD. He has also appeared regularly with The Monteverdi Choir, The Sixteen, The Gabrielli Consort, The English Concert and since 1997 has been a full-time member of the BBC Singers.

Robert has also enjoyed an established solo concert career, taking him to most of the UK's cathedrals and major concert halls including the *Messiah* at The Royal



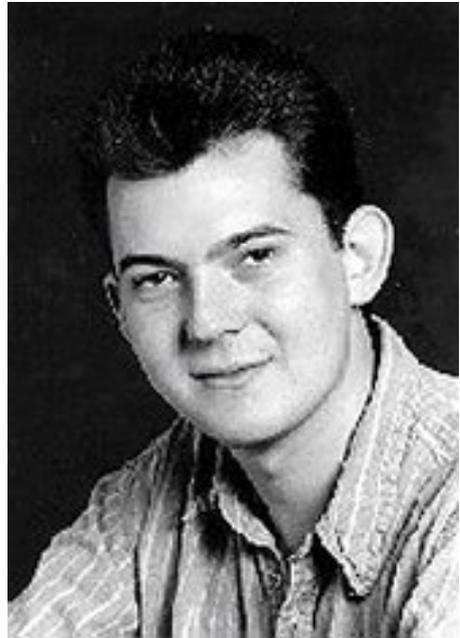
The Soloists



Albert Hall under Sir David Willcocks, Tippett's *Child Of Our Time* at The Symphony Hall Birmingham under Owen Arwell Hughes, *Carmina Burana* and Schnittke's 4th *Symphony* at The Barbican, *Opera Olio* at The Royal Festival Hall, Mozart's *Requiem* and Haydn's *Stabat Mater* at The Queen Elizabeth Hall, several recitals in The Purcell Room, the part of Maintop in *Billy Budd* (concert performances) at The Bridgewater Hall, and various concerts including Britten's *St Nicolas* at St John's Smith Square. He made his debut at the Three Choirs Festival as the Evangelist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* under Joshua Rifkin in 1996 and in 1998 made his debut at the Proms in Kurt Weil's *Prohетен*. His repertoire is comprehensive, comfortably performing works from centuries ago to the present day, and he feels a particular affinity with Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*. Robert also relishes singing the part of Elgar's *Gerontius*, which he performs regularly both at home and abroad.

Concert engagements also take him worldwide. In recent seasons he has sung Elgar's *The Kingdom* in the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Argentina; *The Creation* in Colombo, Sri Lanka; *The Dream of Gerontius* in Cape Town, South Africa; Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv, Israel; *Judas Maccabaeus* for the MDR in Leipzig and Halle, Germany; *St Nicolas* in Groningen, Assen, Leeuwarden and Kampen, Holland; Handel's *Ode on St Cecilia's Day* in Padua – Italy; Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *St Matthew Passion* and Handel's *Messiah* in Odense, Esbjerg, Aarhus and Aalborg, Denmark; *Elijah* in Kristiansund, Norway; *St Matthew Passion* arias in Palma, Majorca; Santiago, Bilboa and the Canary Islands, Spain; Salzburg,

Austria; Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka and Nagoya, Japan, *Elijah* again in Boulogne, France, and Handel's *Jephtha* in Odense, Aarhus, Esbjerg and Aalborg in Denmark.



Robert has broadcast regularly on Classic FM and BBC Radio 3, including Vaughan Williams' *Hodie* with the BBCSO. His solo CD recordings include works by Purcell, Schubert and Grainger (*Brigg Fair*) with John Eliot Gardiner on the Phillips label; Maintop in Britten's *Billy Budd* with Kent Neganó and the Hallé on Erato; The Second Priest in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* with Gardiner again on Archiv; Marquis Pierre in Kurt Weill's *The Firebrand of Florence* with Sir Andrew Davis and the BBCSO on Capriccio; works by William Croft with John Scott on Hyperion; Rachmaninoff *Vespers* with David Hill on



The Soloists



BBC; *Noel* with David Hill and The Bach Choir and Robert was also a tenor soloist on the award winning CD *The Crown Of Thorns* with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen.

For television Robert's solo recordings include filming works by Carl Orff with Donald Runnicles in Munich for *The South Bank Show*, works by Purcell for *England, My England* with Gardiner and he also filmed the part of the Venetian Opera Singer in the feature film of *Dorian Gray*.

His voice is often heard on TV and Film soundtracks, including the singing voice of Daniel in BBC's *Daniel Deronda*, a young monk in *Brother Cadfael* and several *Harry Potter* films.

On a lighter note, Robert has also made recordings or performed live with Elton John, Sting, Dusty Springfield, Mike Oldfield, The Opera Babes, Susan Boyle, Johnny Mathis, Richard and Adam, Jonathan and Charlotte, Jai MacDowell and Il Divo.



JIMMY HOLLIDAY (BASS) started singing at the age of six at Lichfield Cathedral. He studied for four years at The Royal College of Music, where he won numerous awards, including MBF's inaugural Richard Van Allan award and the Tenth Hampshire Singer of the Year competition. He completed his studies at the prestigious National Opera Studio, London. He regularly works with the UK's leading choirs, ensembles and consorts and is also a regular oratorio performer.

Opera roles from RCM productions include Bottom in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Sarastro in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Kecal in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*. More recently he made his debut with ENO in Wolfgang Rihm's *Jakob Lenz*, and performed the roles of Nick Shadow in Stravinsky's *A Rake's Progress* and King Heinrich in Wagner's *Lohengrin* with Ostrava Opera Company, Czech Republic. Future roles include covering Bottom from Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (again!) and the role of Colline from Puccini's *La Boheme*, both with Opera North.

Jimmy last appeared with Tring Choral Society last July, as part of EXAUDI.





Felix Mendelssohn



Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg in 1809, the son of a banker, Abraham Mendelssohn (who later changed his surname to Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and who was himself the son of the German-Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn).

The family moved to Berlin in 1812, where Abraham and Lea Mendelssohn sought to give Felix, his brother Paul, and sisters Fanny and Rebecca, the best education possible. His sister Fanny Mendelssohn (later Fanny Hensel), became a well-known pianist and amateur composer; originally Abraham had thought that she, rather than her brother, might be the more musical. However, at that time, it was not considered proper (by either Abraham or Felix) for a woman to have a career in music, so Fanny remained an amateur musician.

Like Mozart before him, Mendelssohn was regarded as a child prodigy. He began taking piano lessons from his mother when he was six and, at seven, was tutored by Marie Bigot in Paris. From 1817 he studied composition with Carl Friedrich Zelter in Berlin. He was also a prolific composer as a child, and wrote his first published work, a piano quartet, by the time he was thirteen. Zelter introduced Mendelssohn to his friend and correspondent, the elderly Goethe. He later took lessons from the composer and piano virtuoso Ignaz Moscheles who, however, confessed in his diaries that he had little to teach him.

Between the ages of twelve and fourteen, Mendelssohn wrote twelve string symphonies. At the age of sixteen, he wrote his String Octet in E Flat Major, the first work which showed the full power of his genius. This Octet and his overture to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's*

Dream, which he wrote a year later, are the best known of his early works. (He wrote incidental music for the play sixteen years later in 1842, including the famous Wedding March.)

In 1829 Mendelssohn paid the first of ten visits to Britain, where Moscheles, already settled in London, introduced him to influential musical circles. He had a great success, conducting his *First Symphony* and playing in public and private concerts. In the summer he visited Edinburgh and became a friend of the composer John Thomson. On subsequent visits he met Queen Victoria and her musical husband Prince Albert, both of whom were great admirers of his music.

In 1835, he was appointed as conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. This appointment was extremely important for him; he felt himself to be a German and wished to play a leading part in his country's musical life and, despite efforts by the king of Prussia to lure him to Berlin, Mendelssohn concentrated on developing the musical life of Leipzig and in 1843 he founded the Leipzig Conservatory, where he persuaded Ignaz Moscheles and Robert Schumann to join him.

Mendelssohn's personal life was conventional. His marriage to Cécile Jeanrenaud on 28 March 1837 was very happy and the couple had five children: Carl, Marie, Paul, Lilli and Felix. Mendelssohn was an accomplished painter in watercolours.

Mendelssohn suffered from bad health in the final years of his life, aggravated by nervous problems and overwork, and he was greatly distressed by the death of his sister Fanny in May 1847. He died later that same year, after a series of strokes, on 4 November 1847, in Leipzig.



...as a matter of interest...



Elijah, or Elias, was a prophet in Israel in the ninth century BC. He appears in the Hebrew Bible, Talmud, Mishnah, Christian Bible, and the Qur'an. According to the Books of Kings, Elijah raised the dead, brought fire down from the sky, and ascended into heaven by a whirlwind. In the New Testament, both Jesus and John the Baptist are on some occasions thought to be Elijah. He is also one of two Old Testament figures (along with Moses) who appears and converses with Jesus during the Transfiguration.

Elijah is invoked weekly at the Havdalah ritual that marks the end of Shabbat, and in other Jewish rituals, among them the Passover seder. Based on a prophecy in Malachi, many Jews await his return as precursor to the coming of the Messiah. In Eastern Europe, he is known as "Elijah the Thunderer" and is blamed in folklore for poor weather!

In the New Testament, Jesus would say for those who believed, that John the Baptist was Elijah, who would come before the "great and terrible day" as predicted by Malachi.

Jesus' ministry had little in common with that of Elijah; in particular, He preached the forgiveness of one's enemies, while Elijah killed his. However, miracle stories similar to those of Elijah were associated with Jesus (eg raising of the dead and miraculous feeding). In the Gospel of Luke, when Herod Antipas hears some of the stories surrounding Jesus, some tell him that John the Baptist (whom he had executed) has come back to life. Others tell him that it is Elijah. Later, in the same gospel, Jesus asks his disciples who the people say that he is. Peter's answer includes Elijah, among others. By this time, Elijah had entered folklore as a rescuer of Jews in distress. During Jesus' crucifixion, some of the onlookers wondered if Elijah would come to rescue him.



*Elijah on Mount Horeb,
by Daniele da Volterra
(c 1555)*



Mendelssohn; *Elijah*



(Famine and crisis spread across the country. The people implore God to relieve their suffering with prayer and protest, but to no avail. Obadiah, a loyal follower, exhorts the people to look within for salvation.)

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.

Overture

(Orchestra)

1. 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! Will then the Lord be no more God in Zion? The deeps afford no water, and the rivers are exhausted. The suckling's tongue now cleaveth for thirst to his mouth. The infant children ask for bread, and there is no one breaketh it to feed them

2. The People

Lord, bow Thine ear to our prayer

Two Women

Zion spreadeth her hands for aid, and there is neither help nor comfort.

3. 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.

4. Obadiah

'If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me, ye shall ever surely find Me.' Thus saith our God. Oh! that I knew where I might find Him, that I might even come before His

presence!

5. 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. 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 on all them that love him and keep his commandments.

(Elijah is commanded by an angel to attend a widow in distress. In the midst of her suffering, he miraculously raises her son from the dead, turning her heart back to God in the process.)

6. 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.

7. Angels

For He shall give His angels charge over thee; that they shall protect thee in all ways thou goest; that their hands shall uphold and guide thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

An Angel

Now Cherith's brook is dried up, Elijah, rise and depart, and get thee to Zarepath; thither abide: for the Lord hath commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. 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.

8. A 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. Help my son! There is no breath left in him.

Elijah

Give me thy son. Turn unto her, O Lord my God, O turn in mercy; 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!

Widow

Wilt thou show 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!

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!

Widow

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

Elijah

Now behold, thy son liveth.

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?

Both

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, love Him with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. O blessed are they who fear Him!

9. Chorus

Blessed are the men who fear Him, they ever walk in the ways of peace. Through darkness riseth light to the upright. He is gracious, compassionate; He is righteous.

(Three years having passed, Elijah resurfaces at Ahab's court to challenge the

priests of Baal. The whole kingdom gathers before the high altar to witness the showdown: Baal's followers mount an impressive spectacle, calling three times upon their gods to appear and consume the sacrifice - each time without success. Elijah steps into the silence and calls on his Lord, who rains down fire on the altar. The awestruck people, spurred on by Elijah, set upon the idolaters and slaughter them at a brook by the foot of the mountain.)

10. Elijah

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

Ahab

Art thou Elijah? Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

The People

Thou art Elijah, thou 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 we shall see whose God is the Lord.

The People

And then we shall see whose God is 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 will call upon the Lord Jehovah; and the god who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

The People

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.

11. Priests of Baal

Baal, we cry to thee, hear and answer us!
Heed the sacrifice we offer! Hear us, Baal!
Hear, mighty god! Baal, oh answer us!
Baal, let thy flames fall and extirpate the
foe!

12. Elijah

Call him louder, for he is a god! He talketh,
or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or,
peradventure, he sleepeth: so awaken him!
Call him louder, call him louder!

Priests of Baal

Hear our cry, O Baal! Now arise!
Wherefore slumber?

13. 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! Baal! Hear and answer, Baal! Mark
how the scorner derideth us! Hear and
answer!

14. Elijah

Draw near all ye people, come to me.
Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel,
this day let it be known that Thou art God,
and that I am Thy servant! Lord God of
Abraham! Oh show to all this people that I
have done these things according to Thy
word. Oh hear me, Lord, and answer me!
Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, oh
hear me and answer me, and show this
people that Thou art Lord God. And let
their hearts again be turned!

15. Angels

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he
shall sustain thee. He never will suffer the
righteous to fall: He is at thy right hand.
Thy mercy, Lord, is great, and far above
the heavens. Let none be made ashamed,
that wait upon Thee!

16. Elijah

O Thou, who makest 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, 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!

17. Elijah

Is not His word like a fire, and like a
hammer that breaketh the rock? 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.

18. A Woman

Woe unto them who forsake Him!
Destruction shall fall upon them, for they
have transgressed against Him. Though
they are by Him redeemed, yet have they
spoken falsely against Him, from Him have
they fled.

*(With Baal's followers in full retreat,
Obadiah reminds Elijah to make good on
his promise to lift the curse. Elijah calls
three times on the Almighty to bring relief.
A child sent up to keep watch finally spots
storm clouds on the horizon. The heavens
burst forth with rain and the people rejoice.)*

19. Obadiah

O man of God, help thy people! Among the
idols of the Gentiles, are there any that can
command the rain, or cause the heavens to
give their showers? The Lord our God
alone can do these things.

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, help Thy servant now, O God!

The People

Open the heavens and send us relief: help, 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 Child

There is nothing. The heavens are as brass, they 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 Child

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 Child

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 Child

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 for evermore!

20. The People

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!

Interval

PART TWO

(A rousing aria sets up Part Two with a powerful statement of God's ability to help all loyal followers in the face of adversity.)

21. 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.'

(Elijah returns to confront Ahab and his queen, reminding that their temporal rule depends on legitimacy conferred by a higher power. Jezebel seeks to turn the tables on the prophet, portraying him as a renegade, a traitor, a magician who must be blamed for the suffering brought by the famine. A mob poisoned by the queen's accusations turns on Elijah and his followers, and Elijah barely escapes. Hidden by Obadiah, Elijah flees to the wilderness, where a band of angels watch over the prophet in his darkest hour. The angels urge patience and endurance as

Elijah rages against the injustice of his plight and encounters his own feelings of self-doubt.)

22. Chorus

Be not afraid, saith God the Lord. Be not afraid, thy help is near. Be not afraid, thy help is near. Be not afraid, saith God the Lord.

23. 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.

Jezebel

Have ye not heard he hath prophesied against all Israel?

Courtiers

We heard it with our ears.

Jezebel

Hath he not prophesied also against the king?

Courtiers

We heard it with our ears.

Jezebel

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!

Courtiers

He shall perish!

Jezebel

Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets?

Courtiers

He shall perish!

Jezebel

Yea, by the sword he destroyed them all!

Courtiers

He destroyed them all!

Jezebel

He also closed the heavens . . .

Courtiers

He also closed the heavens . . .

Jezebel

. . . and called down a famine upon the land!

Courtiers

. . . and called down a famine upon the land!

Jezebel

So go ye forth and seize Elijah, for he is worthy to die; slaughter him! do unto him as he hath done!

24. The People

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!

25. Obadiah

Man of God, now let my words be precious in thy sight. Thus saith Jezebel; 'Elijah is worthy to die'. So the mighty gather against thee, and they have prepared a net for thy steps; that they may seize thee, that they say slay thee. Arise then, and hasten for thy life; to the wilderness journey. The Lord thy God doth go with thee: He will not fail thee, He will not forsake thee. Now begone, and bless me also

Elijah

Though stricken, they have not grieved. Tarry here my servant: the Lord be with thee. I journey hence to the wilderness.

26. 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! It is enough! O Lord, now take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers. Now let me die, Lord, take away my life

27. Tenor

See, now he sleepeth beneath a juniper tree in the wilderness, and there the angels of the Lord encamp round about all them that fear Him.

28. Angels

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.

29. Angels

He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps. Shouldst thou, walking in grief, languish, He will quicken thee.

30. An Angel

Arise, Elijah, for thou hast a long journey before thee. Forty days and forty nights shalt thou go to Horeb, the mount of God.

Elijah

O Lord, I have labored in vain; yea, I have spent my strength for naught! O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down; that the mountains would flow down at Thy presence, to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, through the wonders of Thy works! O Lord, why hast Thou made them to err from Thy ways and hardened their hearts that they do not fear Thee? O that I now might die!

31. An Angel

Oh rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desires. Commit thy way unto Him, and trust in Him, and fret not thyself because of evil doers.

32. Chorus

He that shall endure to the end, shall be saved.

(Elijah's guardian angel readies the prophet to witness the sign of hope he has been yearning for. A great commotion precedes the appearance of the Almighty - storms, tidal waves, earthquakes and fire give way to the "still small voice" of God Himself. Seraphim and lesser angels surround the area and command Elijah to return to lead his loyal followers from hiding and restore the Kingdom of Israel to its rightful path. Bolstered by the encounter, Elijah bids farewell to the wilderness and resumes his mission.)

33. 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.

An 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.

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.

35. Angel

Above Him stood the Seraphim, and one cried to another:

Chorus

Holy, holy, holy is God the Lord, the Lord Sabaoth! Now His glory hath filled all the earth.

36. Angels

Go, return upon thy way! For the Lord yet hath left Him seven thousand in Israel, knees which have not bowed to Baal. Go, return upon thy way! Thus the Lord commandeth.

Elijah

I go on my way in the strength of the Lord, For Thou art my Lord; and I will suffer for Thy sake. My heart is therefore glad, my glory rejoiceth; and my flesh shall also rest in hope.

37. 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.

(Elijah's mighty exploits and successes are chronicled, as are his transfiguration and ascension into heaven in a chariot of fire.)

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 judgments 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.

39. Tenor

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in their heavenly Father's realm. Joy on their heads shall be for everlasting, and all sorrow and mourning shall flee away for ever.

42. Chorus

And 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.

...and, in case you didn't know...

The religion of the god Baal was widely accepted among the ancient Jews, and although it was put down at times, it was never permanently stamped out. Kings, and other royalty of the ten Biblical tribes, worshipped the god. The ordinary people also ardently worshipped this sun god, because their prosperity depended on the productivity of their crops and livestock. The god's images were erected on many buildings and, within the religion, there appeared to be numerous priests and various classes of devotees. During the ceremonies, they wore appropriate robes and the ceremonies included burning incense and offering burnt sacrifices, occasionally consisting of human victims. The officiating priests danced around the altars, chanting frantically and cutting themselves with knives to inspire the attention and compassion of the god.

In the Bible, Baal is also called Beelzebub, or Baalzebub, one of the fallen angels of Satan.

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Our web site contains details of future concerts, rehearsal dates and many other details that are sure to interest friends of our choir. You can visit us at www.tringchoral.org.uk

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Handel; Messiah



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Richard Tregoning
John Wignall
Guy Williams

* Semi-chorus



Chiltern Orchestral Society



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Violins; Frances Bigg, Akiko Coulter, Darrell Dunning, Marion Garrett, David Glenister, Ed Hewitt, David Moore, Leslie Pearce, Mark Redman, Chris Shelley, Frances Stanhope

Violas; Steffi Cook, Roger Evans, Katie Hayes, John Saunders

Cellos; Hilary Drinkall, Mary Harris

Basses; Elliott Dryer-Beers, Sudhir Singh

Flutes; Jemma Bogan, Hayley Porter

Oboe; Victoria Parkins, Frances Slack

Clarinets; Esther Moors, Theresa Whiffen

Bassoon; Caroline Cartwright, Thomas, Dryer-Beers

Horns; Stuart Carruthers, Simon Cove, Herrick Hayes, John Lavell

Trumpets; Jeremy Loukes, Allan Robinson

Trombones; Simon Astridge, David Taine

Tuba; Mark McKrill

Tympani; Richard Baron-Tait

Organ; Ken Martlew



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