

14 November 1976

**Royal
Tunbridge
Wells
Choral
Society**

MENDELSSOHN

Elijah

1976 - 1977

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Elijah

an Oratorio composed by
FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY

Original libretto by
Pastor Julius Schubring

Susan Kessler *mezzo-soprano*
Doreen Millman *soprano*
Henry Howell *tenor*
John Noble (Elijah) *baritone*

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society
The Choir of the Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School
(Choirmistress: Miss Mortimore)
The Canterbury Festival Orchestra
(Leader: Maureen McKeown)

conducted by

ALLAN WICKS

Assembly Hall
Royal Tunbridge Wells
SUNDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 1976 at 3 p.m.

Orchestra and Artists

The Canterbury Festival Orchestra

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society extends a very warm welcome this afternoon to our distinguished visitors from Canterbury. The orchestra came into being under its present title, in 1966, for a performance of Britten's *War Requiem* with the Canterbury Choral Society, and now plays regularly for that Society. Under their leader, Maureen McKeown, they have several notable successes to their credit, including performances of Mahler's 8th Symphony, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and the Berlioz *Requiem*. Later this year, at Christmas, they will be giving a performance of Mahler's 2nd Symphony.

ALLAN WICKS

Our conductor this afternoon is Organist and Master of Choristers at Canterbury Cathedral. He was born at Bingley, Yorkshire, and educated at St John's School, Leatherhead, and at Christ Church, Oxford. His previous appointments were at York Minster and at Manchester Cathedral. With this background it is not surprising that Dr Wicks has a special interest in the conducting of choral music. He has made a number of broadcasts and has recorded, at the organ of St Paul's Cathedral, Messiaen's *La Nativité*.

Sussan Kessler was born in Sydney, Australia, where she studied with Marjorie Walker. She won many prizes and awards, appeared on television and performed in opera. In 1973 she came to London and later that year went to Germany to study German at the Goethe Institute. Miss Kessler has a wide repertoire and has given many performances in France, Austria and Switzerland, as well as at the Wigmore Hall in London and throughout the provinces. Her most recent success was at the London Bach Festival earlier this year.



Henry Howell is Birmingham-born, but has spent a good deal of his time in Australia, returning to this country in 1973. He is a graduate of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and is one of the founders, and a former director and manager, of the Queensland Opera Company, with whom he sang 30 major roles as principal tenor. In this country, he has performed with the London Choral Society at the Royal Albert Hall, and has recorded for the BBC with the New Opera Company at Sadlers Wells.



Doreen Millman hails from Canada, and in 1967 – whilst still a student at the University of Toronto – she sang with the Canadian Opera Company. Later, she appeared with the Symphony Orchestra of Kingston, Ontario, as soprano soloist in *'Elijah'*. Miss Millman has spent the past five years in this country and during that time has performed works by Wagner, Sullivan, Bach and Verdi.

John Noble is best known as a concert singer, but he has also appeared with Covent Garden Opera, the English Opera Company and the Handel Opera Society. He created the title role in the British stage premiere of *'Wat Tyler'*. He has sung with all the major musical organisations in Britain, in many international festivals throughout Europe, and has performed under the batons of both Sir Adrian Boult and Sir Charles Groves.



Christopher Harris – the Society's chorus-master for today's concert – was born in Tunbridge Wells and educated at Skinners School. He won an organ scholarship to Jesus College, Oxford, and later graduated MA at Cardiff University. He is widely-travelled, and among his recent performances was a recital given at St Paul's Cathedral in Boston, Mass. He is now Head of Music at Skinners School and Organist at St John's Church.



Felix Mendelssohn

ELIJAH

Mendelssohn completed only two oratorios the first of which, *St Paul*, was given its first performance in Germany in 1836 when the composer was 27 years of age.

Soon afterwards, he was anxious to find a suitable subject for a new oratorio, and letters of the period exchanged with a friend in London reveal the first mention of a possible '*Elijah*'.

But it was only after long and exhaustive correspondence that Mendelssohn finally accepted an old family friend — Pastor Julius Schubring — as his librettist. Even so, the two were frequently at cross-purposes, for the Pastor envisaged a 'musical sermon', while Mendelssohn was determined to write an oratorio with considerable dramatic impact.

The result was that Mendelssohn himself revised Schubring's original text — a task which took him six years to complete. It was while the work was lying fallow in this way that Mendelssohn received, in 1845, an enquiry from the Birmingham Festival asking whether '*he could contribute a novelty which would give distinction to the great Midland Meeting of 1846*'.

This enquiry acted as a catalyst and despite the limited amount of time, and the intolerable heat of the summer of 1846, Mendelssohn managed not to disappoint the good people of Birmingham. The composer himself conducted the first performance in the Birmingham Town Hall on 26 August 1846, and in April of the following year he again conducted the work at the Exeter Hall, London, at a performance given by the Sacred Harmonic Society.

But by this time, years of over-work had undermined Mendelssohn's health. The great pressure under which he always worked, the amount of composing and editing work he undertook, his meticulous attention to detail of both music and words, and the heat of the previous summer all took their final toll, and Mendelssohn died on 4 November, 1847, just six months after his triumphant success.

Part I

Introduction	As God the Lord of Israel liveth
Overture	
Chorus	Help Lord!
Duet and Chorus	Lord bow Thine ear to our prayer
Recit	Ye people rend your hearts
Air	If with all your hearts
Chorus	Yet doth the Lord see it not
Recit	Elijah get thee hence
Double Quartet	For He shall give His angels
Recit	Now Cherith's brook is dried up
Recit and Duet	What have I to do with Thee?
Chorus	Blessed are the men who fear Him
Recit Chorus	As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth
Double Chorus	Baal, we cry to thee
Recit	Call him louder
Chorus	Hear our cry O Baal!
Chorus	Baal hear and answer
Air	Lord God of Abraham
Quartet	Cast thy burden upon the Lord
Recit	O Thou who makest Thine angels spirits
Chorus	The fire descends from Heaven
Air	Is not His word like a fire?
Air	Woe unto them who forsake Him
Recit	O man of God, help thy people
Recit Chorus	O Lord, Thou hast overthrown
Chorus	Thanks be to God

Part II

Air	Hear ye Israel
Chorus	Be not afraid

Chorus	And then shall your light break forth
Recit Chorus	The Lord hath exalted thee
Chorus	Woe to him
Recit	Man of God
Air	It is enough
Recit	See now he sleepeth
Trio	Lift thine eyes
Chorus	He, watching over Israel
Recit	Arise, Elijah
Air	O rest in the Lord
Chorus	He that shall endure to the end
Recit	Night falleth around me
Chorus	Behold, God the Lord passed by
Recit Quartet and Chorus	Holy, Holy, Holy
Chorus	Go return upon the way
Recit	I go on my way
Air	For the mountains shall depart
Chorus	Then did Elijah
Air	Then shall the righteous
Recit	Behold God hath sent Elijah
Chorus	But the Lord from the north
Quartet	O come, everyone that thirsteth



Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

Founded in 1904, the Society gives local people an opportunity of performing, and listening to, choral music to very high standards in the company of professional musicians. New members are always very welcome and are invited to write for details to The Secretary, G.D. Stredder, Birchetts Court, Stockland Green Road, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. A cordial invitation is also extended to new Patrons and Vice-President of the Society, which is supported both the National Federation of Music Societies and the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Some idea of the scope and range of the Society's work in recent years can be seen from the following list of performances in Tunbridge Wells.

- 1976 BACH B minor Mass
- 1975 ORFF Carmina Burana
HOLST Hymn of Jesus
VERDI Four Sacred Pieces
- 1974 BACH St John Passion
HANDEL Messiah
- 1973 ELGAR Spirit of England
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Sea Symphony
WALTON Belshazzar's Feast
- 1972 VERDI Requiem
BACH St Matthew Passion
- 1971 ELGAR The Dream of Gerontius
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Dona Nobis Pacem
BRAHMS Requiem
- 1970 MENDELSSOHN Elijah
BACH St John Passion
VERDI Aida
- 1969 BEETHOVEN Choral Symphony
ELGAR The Music Makers
LAMBERT Rio Grande
- 1968 HANDEL Messiah
VERDI Requiem
- 1967 HAYDN Creation
ELGAR The Dream of Gerontius
- 1966 BRUCKNER Mass in F minor
ROSSINI Stabat Mater
COLERIDGE-TAYLOR Hiawatha

