

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
CHORAL SOCIETY

Felix Mendelssohn

ELIJAH

Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells
Sunday, 10th November 2024



Royal Tunbridge Wells
CHORAL
SOCIETY

WWW.RTWCS.ORG.UK

RTWCS is a Registered Charity, number 273310



Please join us for

Christmas Carols

We are delighted to continue our long tradition with the Hotel du Vin to sing Christmas carols in the lobby on Christmas Eve – we hope to see you there!

Tuesday 24th December, 7:30 p.m.



Royal Tunbridge Wells
CHORAL
SOCIETY

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

ELIJAH
OP 70

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society & Orchestra

President: Roy Dunstall

Conductor: Robyn Sevastos

Orchestra Leader: Andrew Laing

Soloists: Helen Bailey, Felicity Buckland, Greg Tassell,
Louis Hurst, Isabelle Stoddart

***With thanks to Trevor Mottram Ltd for their kind support
for this concert***

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society is a vibrant community of people from all walks of life. It is an amateur mixed voice choir spanning a wide age group, with members drawn from the Kent and East Sussex area around Tunbridge Wells. Professional Music Director Robyn Sevastos, aided by experienced accompanist Craig Hudson, teaches, guides and inspires us in learning and performing a wide range of choral music.

The Choral Society stages four concerts each year at the Assembly Hall Theatre and at other venues in and around Tunbridge Wells. Professional soloists and orchestra members join us in these performances.

We are always happy to hear from anyone who is interested in joining the Choir. Rehearsals are held every Monday in term time at St John's Church Hall, Amherst Road, Tunbridge Wells. We meet at 7.30pm, rehearsals run for two hours, and you are welcome to come along to try us out. For more details of events and how to join, visit our website: rtwcs.org.uk.

SUPPORTING ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY

If you would like to offer financial support to arts in the community, and to RTWCS in particular, you can become a Patron. Your support will help the Choir to employ professional soloists and orchestra members, and to maintain our high standard of performance. For more information contact Elena, our Patrons and Friends Secretary at patrons_secretary@rtwcs.org.uk.

Current Patrons and Friends to whom we offer our thanks for their continuing support:

Gold

Mr G Grant
Mrs E Phillips
Mr W Rutherford

Silver

Mr T Hurrell
Mrs E Lewis-Grey
Mrs P Maxwell

Friends

Mrs H MacNab

Elijah

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy 1809-1847

Although possibly less adventurous than his contemporaries of the Early Romantic period, Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner and Hector Berlioz, much of Felix Mendelssohn's music is familiar to today's audiences. He has been described as a 'Classicising Romantic': one who preferred to adapt the traditional forms rather than casting them aside.

It is clear that he looked to the past for guidance when working on his two oratorios, *Elijah* and *St Paul*, and he is known to be a great admirer of the works of JS Bach. He championed a renaissance of interest in the oeuvre of both Bach and Handel.

While his orchestral works are familiar, choral works and songs figure large in Mendelssohn's opus, and he wrote five settings from *The Book of Psalms* for chorus and orchestra. After hearing his setting of Psalm 42, Schubert is reported to have said that this was *the highest point that he [Mendelssohn] reached as a composer for the church. Indeed the highest point recent church music has reached at all.*

Mendelssohn's grandfather Moses was prominent in the German Jewish community and was well known in his time as a religious philosopher. His grandson, Felix, was not born into an observant household, his own father having renounced Judaism before his son's birth. After moving to Berlin, the members of the family were baptised into the Reformed Protestant church, and added the name Bartholdy (after a farm purchased by Moses) to indicate their break from the religion of their forbears.

Both Felix and his sister, Fanny, were recognised early on as having exceptional musical talent. Felix began piano lessons when he was six and made his first public appearance when he was nine, playing in a chamber music concert. Two of his best-loved works, the String Octet and the overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were written before his 18th birthday.

He studied music with influential teachers, while at the same time taking an interest in art, literature and philosophy. His meeting with Goethe in 1821 led him to set a number of the writer's poems to music. He travelled widely, visiting the important European cities including Vienna and Rome throughout his twenties.

Mendelssohn first visited Britain in 1829, where his music soon became very popular and his performances were much appreciated by Queen Victoria. The composer conducted his oratorio *St Paul* to great acclaim in 1837 at the Birmingham Triennial Music Festival, after which *Elijah* (with a libretto both in English and German) was commissioned by the Festival organisers, for a fee of 200 guineas. When he returned to the city to conduct the première of *Elijah* in 1846 crowds thronged the streets to greet him. The audience in the Town Hall regularly interrupted the performance to applaud, with the result that eight of the sections were encored.

The Oratorio

Structurally, *Elijah* is made up of the traditional chorus, recitative and aria in standard oratorio form, to which the composer added complex choral fugues in the manner of Bach. Indeed, it is said that the aria *It is enough* (No 24 in our performance of *Elijah*) is modelled on the alto aria *Es ist Vollbracht, It is finished*, in Bach's *St John Passion*. Most of the content is taken from the Old Testament of the Bible, with some references to Matthew's gospel.

Elijah is in two parts: the introduction and first five numbers concern the drought visited on the People of Israel for the worship of a false god, Baal. When Elijah prophesies the coming of the drought, a sombre orchestral motif of three descending diminished fifths reinforces his pronouncement, and this motif will reappear later on. The section that follows builds into the form of a fugue, a musical composition in which one or two themes are repeated or imitated by a continuous interweaving of the different phrases. The Israelites lament the famine, and then fall to prayer before Obadiah's aria *If with all your hearts*. This section ends with another fugal chorus, in which The People sing *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*.

An angel commands Elijah to go to the wilderness, and then on to a town where he miraculously raises a widow's son from the dead. The chorus meditates on this event, using texts from the Psalms in *Blessed are the men who fear Him, they ever walk in the way of peace*. There is a confrontation between Elijah and the priests of Baal: Elijah mocks the priests, who call on Baal three times to light the fire beneath a sacrificial bull, without success. Elijah prays to his God, who obliges with a miraculous fire. Elijah and the now repentant Israelites then pray for rain, and a boy is sent up to high ground to look for a distant cloud. When the eventual downpour arrives, a moment that is vividly depicted in the music, it brings immense relief.

Part 2 starts with a soprano aria exhorting the people to be aware of what God can do, and not to fear him, and the chorus picks up the message. Elijah rebukes King Ahab for worshipping Baal, but the unrepentant Queen Jezebel tries to rouse the people against the prophet, and he is forced to flee.

In his exile Elijah is protected by the angels, one of which sings the beautiful aria *O rest in the Lord*. On Mount Horeb, Elijah witnesses a mighty wind, earthquake and fire, followed by the still small voice of God; the chorus report seeing this in *Behold! The Lord God passed by!* The prophet returns rejoicing to his people before another vivid chorus describes him overthrowing powerful kings and ascending to heaven in a chariot of fire.

And then shall your light break forth, allows the chorus to foretell the coming of Christ and, with the last *Amens*, the 'cellos and double basses return to the descending motif of Elijah's first pronouncement.

Writing to a colleague in 1838, the composer tells how he *imagined Elijah as a real prophet through and through, of the kind we could really do with today: strong, zealous and, yes, even bad-tempered, angry and brooding – in contrast to the riff-raff, whether of the court or the people, and indeed in contrast to almost the whole world – and yet borne aloft as if on angel's wings*.

Elijah is divided in two parts, each with five scenes plus a prologue and epilogue. Part 1 focusses on the prophet Elijah's mission to the people who worship Baal and other false gods during a period of drought in Israel. The part begins with a statement from the prophet, followed by an overture. The scenes generally open with a recitative and close with a chorus.

Part 2 describes Elijah's persecution by Queen Jezebel, his inner struggles in responding to God's call to take the word out to the heathen, and finally how his work leads God to take him up to heaven in a fiery chariot.



T R E V O R
M O T T R A M

inspiring you to cook

33-37 The Pantiles
Tunbridge Wells
TN2 5TE

www.trevormottram.co.uk

PART I

The Israelites suffer from famine and drought, and pray for relief. Elijah arrives and declares that God will send rain if the people will turn away from their worship of idols and false gods. Elijah curses the people for their faithlessness

Introduction and Overture:

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.

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! 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. Duet with Chorus:

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. 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.

4 Aria: 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. 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. 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.

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.

7. Recitative & Aria

An Angel: Now Cherith's brook is dried up, Elijah, arise and depart, and get thee to Zarephath, and 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.

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 show wonders to the dead? There is no breath in him

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

The Widow: Shall the dead arise, the dead arise and praise thee?

Elijah: Lord, my God, 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! 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; with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. O blessed are they who fear Him!

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

8. Chorus: The People

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

9. Recitative & 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.

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 follow'd 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 then call 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.

The people beseech Baal to help them by breaking the drought. Elijah points out that they are not heard by their god, and exhorts them to redouble their efforts

10. Chorus: Prophets of Baal

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

12. Recitative & Chorus:

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!

Prophets of Baal: Hear our cry, O Baal, now arise! Wherefore slumber?

11. Recitative & 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.

Prophets of Baal: Baal! Baal! Hear and answer, Baal! Mark how the scorner derideth us! Hear and answer, Baal!

Elijah: Draw near, all ye people, come to me!

Elijah calls on his God to show the people His strength and to persuade the people to turn to Him

12. Aria: Elijah

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 show 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 show this people that Thou art Lord God. And let their hearts again be turned!

13. Quartet:

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!

14. Recitative & Chorus:

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!

15. Aria: 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.

16. Aria: Alto

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

The people watch the clouds for any chance of rain. A child reports that there is nothing to be seen. Elijah instructs him to look again and again, and finally the child says that there is a cloud on the horizon

17. Recitative & Chorus:

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 sins 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: Hearest 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 with 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!

18. Chorus: 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 II

The evidence that God is prepared to help the people is now evident, but there are still powerful figures who hold onto the old religion. The people call for Elijah to be punished for such blasphemy

19. 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? Say, who art thou?'

20. Chorus

'Be not afraid,' saith God the Lord, 'be not afraid, thy help is near!' God, the Lord, thy God, sayeth unto thee: 'Be not afraid!' Though thousands languish and fall beside thee, and tens of thousands around thee perish, yet still it shall not come nigh thee.

21. Recitative and Chorus

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.

The Queen: Have ye not heard, heard he hath prophesied against all 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? Yea, by sword he destroyed them all!

Chorus: He destroyed them all!

The Queen: He also closed the heavens! And called down a famine upon the land!

Chorus: He also closed the heavens! And called down a famine upon the land!

22: Chorus:

Woe to him, he shall perish; he closed the heavens! And why hath he spoken in the Name of the Lord? Let the guilty prophet perish! Woe to him, he shall perish! He hath spoken falsely against our land and us, as we have heard with our ears. Let the guilty prophet perish! So go ye forth, seize on him! He shall die!

Elijah seeks refuge in the desert, but an angel tells him that he must make a long journey to Horeb. The angel assures the prophet that God is with him in his trials

23. Recitative:

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 may 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.

24. 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! 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!

25. Recitative: 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.

26. Chorus:

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

27: Recitative:

The 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 laboured 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!

28. Aria: 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.

29. Chorus:

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

*God appears to the prophet and the people, who are terrified in the face of His power.
Elijah is seen in a great fire, and is then taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot*

30. Recitative:

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.

31. 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.

32. Aria: 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.

33. 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.

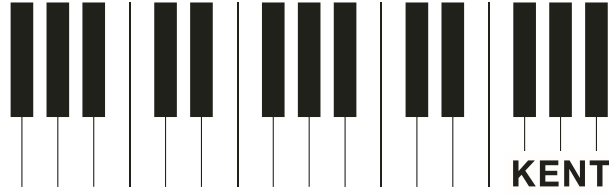
34. Aria: Tenor

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 for ever.

35. 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.

THE PIANO SHOP



Nevill Estate Yard, Eridge, Tunbridge Wells,
TN3 9JR 01892 543233

www.thepianoshopkent.co.uk



strategy



branding

video & podcasts

social media

paid search



web design



01892 579906 bigorangemedia.co.uk
Tunbridge Wells | London | Brighton

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

Music Director: Robyn Sevastos

Accompanist: Craig Hudson

Soprano

Elaine Abbs	Amy Cordiani	Anthea Heyes	Ann Spillman
Glynis Avis	Sue Cordiani	Evelien Hurst-Buist	Penny Stephens
Sue Barker	Alice Davies	Elena Lewis Grey	Catherine Whitlock
Debbie Benson	Alice Donaghy	Joanna Mace	Mary Whitlock
Adrienne Bishop	Fiona Findlay	Louise Packham	Anne Willatt
Diana Blower	Elena Gente	Michele Palmer	Joanne Wye
Felicity Brown	Helen Gotts	Barbara Ross-Jones	Emilia Yau
Adriana Capadose	Maggie Hall	Frances Rotunno	
Heather Champion	Chrystal Hayn	Kate Sarkis	

Alto

Judith Aveson	Alison Jenks	Helen Patten	Nicky Thompson
Margaret Butcher	Sheila Jones	Amanda Philip	Alice Trew
Gillian Cameron-Cooper	Ailsa Kelleher	Catherine Rigby	Katherine Tucker
Pauline Coxshall	Pauline Lloyd	Ros Robertson	Alice Velge
Joanna Finlay	Clare Mwambakale	Jane Selley	Jane Walters
Celia Grew	Laura Marshall	Jenny Selway	Pam White
Sally Hamilton	Lesley Marting	Lucy Smalley	Sarah White
Judith Henderson	Ailsa McMahon	Yvonne Spencer	
Pat Jay	Catherine Palmer	Alison Stevenson	

Tenor

David Cook	Alison Orlowska	Paul Spencer	Danny Walters
Peter Elliott	Olivia Seaman	Jerry Tremenheere	Brian Wong
Peter Mace	Alan Spencer	Nick Vaisey	
Janet Noble	Michael Spencer	Richard Walmsley	

Basses

Ian Aveson	Robert Fenn	Anthony Hoskin	Michael Selway
David Barker	Nicholas Franck	Bob Jay	Christopher Smart
Robin Cameron-Cooper.	Gavin Grant	Steve Margiotta	Clive Steward
Martin Camus-Smith	Antony Gordon	John Martin	Martin Williams
Tarquin Crouch	Graham Hall	Hugh McLeod	David Wright
Mike Dowden	David Ham	Stephen Parris	

ORCHESTRA

1st Violin	Andrew Laing (Leader) Andrew Condon Elisa Harrod Phil McKerracher Monika Molnar	2nd Violin	Mark Cousins Rosie Cousins Robert Skone James Susan Skone James
Viola	Jenny Carter Dave Griffiths Liz Tarrant Vanessa Townsend	'Cello	Helen Drayton Helen Griffiths Jan Penny
Double Bass	Rob Ferguson		
Flute	Ian McLauchlan	Oboe	Jenny Jaggard
Clarinet	Katie Ewins David Floyd	Bassoon	Daniel Emson
Horn	Mary Banks Roy Banks	Trumpet	Callum Robb
Trombone	Effie Sparkhall		
Timpani	David Coronel		



2024 - 2025
SEASON

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Roderick Dunk
Conductor
Carol Jarvis
Trombone



KODÁLY

Variations on a Hungarian Folksong,
The Peacock

PEASLEE

Arrows of Time for Trombone & Orchestra

BRAHMS

Symphony No. 3

SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER, 3pm



Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells

Theatre Box Office 01892 554441



Tickets from £22, Students & Under 18s £5

www.rtwso.org



The RTWSO is a registered charity, no. 295781



Music Director – Robyn Sevastos

Robyn graduated from Melbourne University with a BMus and First Class Honours in Performance. She subsequently moved to England to continue her studies, where she obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Piano Accompaniment at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and a Performance Diploma from the Royal College of Music. She has performed extensively as a piano soloist, and has accompanied and coached singers and instrumentalists in the UK and further afield. As a conductor she has directed many choral

and operatic works, often with internationally renowned artists. In addition to the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society, she is music director of London Opera Productions, Kentish Opera, the Llantilio Crossenny Festival, Sevenoaks Philharmonic Society and Bromley Philharmonic Choir. She has conducted many major choral works including Verdi *Requiem* at Croydon's Fairfield Hall, and Bach *St Matthew Passion* at St Clement Danes in London. She has performed at the Royal Albert Hall, the Barbican and the O2 Arena, and for the then Prince Charles at Kensington Palace and Sandringham.



Andrew Laing – Orchestra Leader

Andrew was born in Aberdeen. He started learning the violin when he was five years old and at sixteen became leader of the National Youth String Orchestra of Scotland. He studied with David Martin at the Royal Academy of Music, winning several prizes and scholarships. While still a student, he was appointed leader of the Morley College Symphony Orchestra, also regularly leading the Ealing Symphony Orchestra, the Hatfield Philharmonic and the Forest Philharmonic. At the RAM, Andy formed and led the Locrian String Quartet. The quartet won many awards, was broadcast on BBC TV and radio and gave numerous first performances of works by contemporary composers.

Subsequently, he became sub-leader of the BBC Radio Orchestra, then leader of the London City Ballet Orchestra. In the nineties, Andy met his wife, Rachel, another violinist, while both were playing on-stage at the Royal Shakespeare Company. Andy is currently leader of both the Bromley and Maidstone Symphony Orchestras.



Soprano Helen Bailey was born in Middlesbrough and studied at The Royal Academy of Music and Trinity Laban, graduating with an MA in Vocal Studies and an Advanced International Diploma in Opera. She initially graduated from Liverpool JMU with a First Class degree in English Literature and Cultural History.

Helen recently performed the title role in Pauline Viardot's *Cinderella* with Carshalton Opera and, earlier this year, sang the role of Tebaldo in Verdi's *Don Carlo* with Midsummer Opera, for whom she has also performed Magda in Puccini's *La Rondine* and the title role in *Jenůfa* by Janaček. Helen has performed principal roles for Opera Brava, Opera South East, OperaUpClose, Kentish Opera, Bath Festival Opera, Rose Opera, Hampstead Garden Opera, Red Earth Opera, and Buxton International Festival Opera.

In addition to her operatic engagements, Helen appears regularly as a soloist with a number of choirs and orchestras across the country. This year, Helen sang Verdi's *Requiem* with the Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra, performed with Vox Anima Chamber Choir and the 1839 Consort, and starred in opera gala concerts with the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

Helen was a finalist in the 2023 *Everybody can!* Robert Presley Professional Development awards. Please see www.helenbailey.org for more information.



Mezzo Soprano Felicity Buckland trained at the RNCM and on ENO's Opera Works programme. Her 2024/5 season appearances include Marcellina *The Marriage of Figaro* (Opera Project/Tobacco Factory), and performances of Mendelssohn *Elijah* and Verdi *Requiem*. She will also return to ENO as Mary Livingstone in Musgrave's *Mary Queen of Scots*, having sung principal roles in both of Phelim McDermott's celebrated productions of Philip Glass: Kasturbai in *Satyagraha*, and Ankhesenpaaten in *Akhnaton*.

Past operatic highlights include: Rosina *The Barber of Seville* (Bradford Opera Festival, Opera South); Amneris *Aïda* (Kentish Opera); Wellgunde *The Rhinegold* (Birmingham Opera); Carmen (Grimeborn/Kentish Opera); Lily *Porgy and Bess* (Theater an der Wien); Nicklausse *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Kentish Opera), La Cenerentola (High Time); Olga *Eugene Onegin* (Opera Up Close); Beggar Woman *Sweeney Todd*, Paquette *Candide*, and Meg Page *Falstaff* (West Green House Opera).

Felicity is in demand on the concert platform, and has made solo appearances at the Royal Festival Hall, for the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, and with the BBC Concert Orchestra.



Tenor Greg Tassell was brought up on a hop farm near Tunbridge Wells in Kent and was a chorister at Durham Cathedral. He studied music at Exeter University, becoming a choral scholar at Exeter Cathedral. He then studied under Welsh tenor Ryland Davies at the Royal Academy of Music. He was a member of English Touring Opera for three seasons and performed roles in Mozart *Magic Flute* and *Marriage of Figaro* and created the role of Badger in American composer Tobias Picker's *Fantastic Mr Fox*. He was part of ETO's award-winning cast in the sensory opera *Midnight Moon* in 2011. Greg appeared in the final of the 2008 London Handel Competition and the 2010 London Bach Competition. Greg now teaches singing at St Edmund's School Canterbury and privately in Broadstairs, whilst still performing in professional concerts around the UK.

Recent notable engagements have included his first performance in the title role of Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius* in Dover, Mendelssohn *Elijah* at The Queen Elizabeth Hall, Bach *St Matthew Passion* for the Three Choirs Festival and Mozart *Requiem* for Canterbury Choral Society. Greg has also appeared on Polish radio as evangelist in Bach *St John Passion* and on the Israeli operatic stage in Purcell's *Fairy Queen*. Greg also conducts Thanet Chamber Choir who will perform a new oratorio by Douglas Coombes called *The Bravest Man* this coming season live on Ramsgate Radio. Greg also performs an Elvis tribute act for friends and family and is considering appearing at the annual Elvis convention in Porthcawl if time allows. Aside from his solo performances, Greg is a founder member of professional chamber choir Sonoro (www.sonoromusic.com) and this year he also received a long service award as a deputy tenor at Canterbury Cathedral for 20 years. www.gregtasselltenor.com



Bass-Baritone Louis Hurst is Winner of the Audience Prize at the Fulham Opera Robert Presley Memorial Verdi Prize 2019 and Finalist for the Wagner Society of England's Singing Competition. Selected to participate in ENO's Opera Works Programme and with British Youth Opera, Mancunian-born Louis gained his MMus with Distinction from the RNCM. His studies were made possible by the generous support of Michael Oglesby, the Drapers Guild, and the Musician's Benevolent Fund.

Louis has worked with English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Britten Sinfonia, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Grange Park Opera, Grimeborn, Zurcher Sing Akademie, Longborough Festival Opera, St. Endellion Summer Festival, and Saffron Opera Group. His operatic highlights include Figaro *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Schicchi *Gianni Schicchi*, Balstrode *Peter Grimes*, Enrico *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Kurwenal *Tristan und Isolde*, Cecil *Maria Stuarda*, Rodrigo *Don Carlo*, Mr Peachum *The Beggar's Opera*, Alfio/Silvio *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*, Father *Hänsel und Gretel*, Donner *Das Rheingold*, Köthner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Re di Scozia *Ariodante*, and on the concert platform his repertoire includes Beethoven

9th Symphony, Rossini *Petite Messe*, countless *Messiahs*, and *Belshazzar's Feast* with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. He is a regular performer with several distinguished choirs at London's Chapel Royal, the Savoy Chapel, Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace, and St George's, Hanover Square amongst others.



Isabelle Stoddart, singing the part of the **Youth**, is currently a year 12 student at Walthamstow Hall School. She achieved her ABRSM grade 8 in Singing this year and is currently working on her diploma. Isabelle also enjoys playing the flute and studying musical theatre, and will take her grade 7 in both by the end of this term.

In 2023, she appeared as The Sorceress in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. This year, she sang the role of Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, and more recently appeared as a guest soloist in Viardot's *Cinderella* with Carshalton Opera.

Isabelle is a very keen sports person, competing at national netball level for her club and continuing to support her school in lacrosse and netball.

Forthcoming RTWCS Concerts

Christmas Concert

Saturday 14th December 2024

St James Church, Ferndale, Tunbridge Wells

Extracts from Bach Christmas Oratorio, and audience Carols

Stainer Crucifixion and Williamson Procession of Palms

Sunday 13th April 2025

3pm: The Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells

Coleridge-Taylor Hiawatha's Wedding Feast

Saturday 28th June 2025

Location and date to be confirmed

Memorial concert for James Whitbourn

Sunday 9th November 2025

3pm: The Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells



FULLER'S



Get Christmas all wrapped up and place your Christmas order now!

Our expert butchers can advise you on recipes and cooking tips for many Christmas favourites including Turkeys and Geese from East Sussex, Duck, Venison, Rib of Beef, Pheasant and other game birds.

Fuller's Farm Shop
Bunny Lane, Eridge ,
Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9BY
01892 541238

www.fullers-tw.co.uk

Fuller's Butchers
5 Nelson Road, Hawkenbury,
Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5AW
01892 526563