SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS

Sopranos
Paula Bregler
Mingus Crozier
Miriya Espereth
Theresa Labrador
Stephanie Latrop
Victoria Leslie
Margaret Penne
Joan Penney
Liesel Rombouts
Heather Smith
Susan Walsh
Lynn Wieg

Alto
Ann Siller
Stephanie Field
Lelia Hammond
Darren Harkins
Georgia Rohrbough
Nedra Stasun
Margaret Smith
Kay Varekus

Tenor
John Addison
John Baker
David Call
Ronald Johnson
Morris Jesson
Jerry Sarris
Peter Schneider
Deon Suess

Baritone
Jay Albert
Gary Janakowski
Jim Pegler
Rob Schlipkover
Sandy Thornton

assisted by member of the
Chair of the Sound:
Robert Metzer, conductor

BROADWAY CHAMBER SYMPHONY

Viola I
Michael Scot, concertmaster
Beth Schmidt
Rebecca Souleup
Ellen Lusk
Fritz Neum
Phyllis Rowe
Avnon Maerzony
Sandra Sinner

Viola II
Pamela Carson, principal
Donna Walters
Dean Deucher
Jacqueline Cederholm
Ellen Zieritz
Joni Cogler
Marcia McElvain
Karen Kotbod

Viola
Sam Williams, principal
Beatrice Baff
Suzanne Ruff
Robert Shangrow
Katherine McWilliams
Shall Peterson
Stephanie Read

Celli
Karen Hummolt, principal
Ron Welch
Connie Radke
Joyce Barnum
Rebecca Beyer
Rosemary Beiner

String Bass
Christine Howell, principal
Keith Lowe
Walter Bamum

Flute
Jared Shangle, principal

Oboe
Lisa Faulkner, principal

Clarinet
Gary Olivas, principal

Bassoon
Don Keelie, principal
Dave Stangland, guest prnc.

Tuba
Forest Newton

Organ
Joan Streemler

Seattle Chamber Singers
and the
Broadway Chamber Symphony
George Shangrow, conductor

Especially for Easter
J.S. Bach's
ST. MATTHEW PASSION
April 9, 8:00 PM
First Presbyterian Church
For ticket information: 324.0455 or write SCS 316 10th E. 98102

March 19, 1982 6:00 PM First Presbyterian Church
As music history entered the Romantic era, the musical world witnessed a decline in interest in and quality of the form known as the oratorio. Having raised to the heights in The Seasons, and The Creation of Joseph Haydn, the form seemed to have run its course, although a few Romantic composers, most notably, Berlioz, Franck, and Liszt did produce some oratorios of significance. It was left for Mendelssohn to revitalize the oratorio to its once-fortunate place in the development of music.

Mendelssohn's father considered much of his son's music (which the world now views as masterpieces of the art too light and imaginative to be considered as a serious effort. He continually suggested that his son might overcome this image of triviality by writing a work of substance, namely an oratorio. Thus, in 1838, St. Paul was completed and performed with such success, launching Mendelssohn into an added direction to his compositional career.

St. Paul was performed in Birmingham, England, in 1837, and the English public which had cherished the oratorio since the triumphs there of Handel, received Mendelssohn with open arms. Mendelssohn became equally enchanted with the English and began to contemplate a new oratorio. He corresponded with an old friend, Pastor Julius Schubring, who with Mendelssohn's aid compiled the libretto for a work about Elijah, possibly the greatest of the pre-Christian holy men of Israel. Written for the Birmingham Festival, Elijah received its premiere under Mendelssohn's direction on August 26, 1846. The first performance met with such approval that eight of the selections in the work were encored.

Elijah seemed an ideal character for an oratorio subject. Biblical scholars have viewed Elijah as the Lord's most favored individual. He is supposedly the only personalty prior to Christ to have seen God face to face, and the events of his life and holy work are replete with the highest drama. This aspect of his chosen character was not lost on Mendelssohn. While the oratorio is often described as an opera without staging, the musical expression of so many oratorios does not always capture the dramatic elements which they intend to portray. Mendelssohn, however, consciously sought to highlight the dramatic impact of Elijah. In writing of his work, the composer said, "In such a character as that of Elijah, it seems to me that the dramatic should predominate — the personality should be introduced as acting and speaking with fervor."

The story of the oratorio deals with basic human conflicts set into Elijah's unshakeable faith in his God, the Lord of Israel. The work begins with Elijah's prophecy of the coming drought in Israel which would punish the people of Israel for forsaking their God. Then, to verify his authority as a prophet of the Lord, Elijah performs a series of miracles and humiliates the priests of the false god, Baal, whom the Israelites had come to worship in place of the Lord. The reign of Baal is not without consequence for Elijah. His enemies rise up against him and he suffers great persecutions, particularly at the hands of the vengeful Jezebel.

The Lord with Elijah and sends a chariot of fire to earth to take Elijah to heaven. For those familiar with the events depicted, it is not difficult to envision the possibilities for musical imagery.

The text is drawn from a broad base of Biblical history, compiled by Schubring from the Lutherian Bible and translated by William Barlowson. The books from which material is extracted include I Kings, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Psalms, Joel, Deuteronomy, Job, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Ecclesiastes I Samuel, Matthew, and Malachi. Bartholomew approached the project with the idea of keeping the Scriptures as nearly an intact as possible. Mendelssohn apparently appreciated the success of that effort when he termed Bartholomew the "translator par excellence."

The music divides the events into two episodes, the first treating the prophecy of Elijah and the events which confirm the prophecy, and the second dealing with Elijah's temptation at the hands of Jezebel and his triumphant ascent to heaven in the chariot of fire.

The work opens with a recitative in which Elijah predicts the drought that will strike Israel. The orchestral overture immediately follows depicting the coming of the drought. Then in a choral recitative followed by a duet with chorus, the people of Israel cry to the Lord for help. Obadiah reminds them of Elijah's prophecy and tells them they must forsake their false gods and worship only the Lord. A tenor aria reveals the beginning of a search for the Lord. In the chorus that follows the people echo the recognition of God's omnipotence while at the same time feeling helpless in their plight brought on by the drought.

An angel then appears to Elijah and orders him to Zarephath where he will have water and be fed by ravens. A chorus of angels assure Elijah of the Lord's protection through them. When the waters of Cherith dry up, the angel reappears and orders Elijah to Zareaphath where he will be cared for by a widow. The Lord again allows rain to fall on the earth.

The woman calls upon Elijah to intercede with the Lord on her behalf and bring her young son back to life. Elijah calls on the Lord to let the child live. The prayer is answered, and Elijah tells the widow that all the Lord expects in return is that she share her bread with all her heart.

Elijah then prophesies that three years from this day he will come out of hiding, show himself to Ahaz, and bear witness to the power of the Lord who will again bring rain to the earth. When Ahaz encounters Elijah he asks if he is the one who troubles Israel. Elijah responds that it is the people of Israel through Ahaz who bring trouble on themselves through forsaking the Lord and worshipping Baal. Elijah asks that all of Israel gather at Mount Carmel where Elijah will challenge the priest of Baal to prove the identity of the true God.

Then follows a series of numbers which depict the story of the attempts of the priests of Baal to get their idol to send fire to consume a bullock. Repeated attempts fail. Finally Elijah challenges the priests to allow the Lord to do the same, and the fire comes and consumes the offering. Elijah orders the priest of Baal killed and commands the people to return to the Lord. Obadiah asks Elijah to ask the Lord for rain. Elijah responds. He prays for rain and sends a youth to wash the bozenim for signs of clouds. When nothing appears, he again reminds the people of their need to repent and give full allegiance to the Lord. A second search of the skies reveals a small cloud and Elijah prays again. This time a small cloud appears and grows into a rain storm. Elijah and the people thank the Lord and rejoice.

As the second part opens, the people are reminded of how the Lord responds to their needs when they worship Him. Elijah calls Him as the one true God. The memory of the people is short, however, and they allow Jezebel to incite them against Elijah. She convinces them that Elijah had really cried out against Israel and should be held responsible for all that the people had suffered. He should be brought to death.

Obadiah warns Elijah that he then flees to the wilderness. Life in the wilderness is difficult, and Elijah suffers depression, calling upon the Lord to end his life. An angel again appears to Elijah and this time he has a long journey to Mount Horeb. Elijah despairs that the Lord seems to have let the people stray from His will. The angel assures him that the Lord is with him. Elijah goes to Mount Horeb. There the Lord comes, after tempest, earthquake, and fire, in a still small voice. Elijah is taken to heaven in a chariot of fire which rises in a whirlwind. The people witness the event and recognize that Elijah was truly a man chosen of God who spoke the truth to them. The oratorio closes in a final chorus of praise.

The score stands as a model in combining sublime lyricism with strong dramatic effects. It rises to the heights of eloquence in the realism of the Biblical events, and the arias represent some of the best lyric writing in all oratorio music. One cannot miss the greatness Mendelssohn attained in this work. Elijah personifies the pinnacle of the 19th century oratorio.

As the second part opens, the people are reminded of how the Lord responds to their needs when they worship Him. Elijah calls Him as the one true God. The memory of the people is short, however, and they allow Jezebel to incite them against Elijah. She convinces them that Elijah had really cried out against Israel and should be held responsible for all that the people had suffered. He should be brought to death.

Obadiah warns Elijah that he then flees to the wilderness. Life in the wilderness is difficult, and Elijah suffers depression, calling upon the Lord to end his life. An angel again appears to Elijah and this time he has a long journey to Mount Horeb. Elijah despairs that the Lord seems to have let the people stray from His will. The angel assures him that the Lord is with him. Elijah goes to Mount Horeb. There the Lord comes, after tempest, earthquake, and fire, in a still small voice. Elijah is taken to heaven in a chariot of fire which rises in a whirlwind. The people witness the event and recognize that Elijah was truly a man chosen of God who spoke the truth to them. The oratorio closes in a final chorus of praise.

The score stands as a model in combining sublime lyricism with strong dramatic effects. It rises to the heights of eloquence in the realism of the Biblical events, and the arias represent some of the best lyric writing in all oratorio music. One cannot miss the greatness Mendelssohn attained in this work. Elijah personifies the pinnacle of the 19th century oratorio.

As the second part opens, the people are reminded of how the Lord responds to their needs when they worship Him. Elijah calls Him as the one true God. The memory of the people is short, however, and they allow Jezebel to incite them against Elijah. She convinces them that Elijah had really cried out against Israel and should be held responsible for all that the people had suffered. He should be brought to death.

Obadiah warns Elijah that he then flees to the wilderness. Life in the wilderness is difficult, and Elijah suffers depression, calling upon the Lord to end his life. An angel again appears to Elijah and this time he has a long journey to Mount Horeb. Elijah despairs that the Lord seems to have let the people stray from His will. The angel assures him that the Lord is with him. Elijah goes to Mount Horeb. There the Lord comes, after tempest, earthquake, and fire, in a still small voice. Elijah is taken to heaven in a chariot of fire which rises in a whirlwind. The people witness the event and recognize that Elijah was truly a man chosen of God who spoke the truth to them. The oratorio closes in a final chorus of praise.

The score stands as a model in combining sublime lyricism with strong dramatic effects. It rises to the heights of eloquence in the realism of the Biblical events, and the arias represent some of the best lyric writing in all oratorio music. One cannot miss the greatness Mendelssohn attained in this work. Elijah personifies the pinnacle of the 19th century oratorio.
MENDELSSOHN
(1799-1847)

ELIJAH

INTRODUCTION. As God the Lord (Barimi-
Overature)
1. C. B. C. Help, Lord!
2. DECT (Soprano and Contra) with C. Barim. Lord, how thin art
3. RECONTR (Tenor). Ye people, read your
4. Aria (Trinar). I'll with all your hearts
5. C. Yet doth the Lord
6. RECONTR (Contra). Elijah, get thee hence
7. DODEA QUARTET (Soprano) For. He shall give his
8. RECONTR (Contra). Now Chorich's
9. RECONTR (Soprano). What have I do
10. RECONTR (Rasa). Give me thy son
11. C. Blessed are the men who fear Him
12. RECONTR (Barim. with C. Barim. As God the Lord of Sabachs

PART I

10. C. Barim. Basi, we cry to thee
11. RECONTR (Barim). Call him louder!
12. C. Hear our cry, O Basi!
13. RECONTR (Barim). Call him louder!
14. RECONTR and AIN (Barim). Draw near,
15. C. Cast thy burden upon the Lord (Coralia)
16. RECONTR (Barim). O Thou, who
17. AIN (Barim). Is not His word like a fire descends
18. ASOSO (Barim). Woe unto them who
19. RECONTR (Trinar). O man of God, help thy
20. RECONTR (Barim) with C. Barim. O Lord, Thou hast overthrown these
21. C. Thanks be to God!

PART II

10. RECONTR (Barim). Night falleth
11. C. Round me
12. RECONTR (Barim). Arie, now!
13. C. Behold, God the Lord
14. RECONTR (Contra) and Quarti (C. Barim). Holy is God the Lord
15. C. Go, return upon thy way
16. RECONTR (Barim). I go on my way
17. ASOSO (Barim). For the mountains
18. C. Then did Elijah
19. AIN (Barim). Then shall the righteous
20. RECONTR (Barim). Night falleth
21. TAO (Soprano). Lift thin
eyes
22. C. He, watching over Israel
23. RECONTR (Contra). Arie, Elijah
24. RECONTR (Contra). O Lord, I have
25. AIN (Contra). O rest in the Lord
26. C. He shall endure

(Barim)

Elijah

1. C. O Lord, I have
2. RECONTR (Contra). I turn my ear to the
3. C. Give me thy son
4. RECONTR (Contra). Give me thy son
5. RECONTR (Quarti). For He shall give his
6. RECONTR (Contra). Now Chorich's
7. RECONTR (Soprano). What have I do
8. RECONTR (Rasa). Give me thy son
9. C. Blessed are the men who fear Him
10. RECONTR (Barim. with C. Barim. As God the Lord of Sabachs

PART I

10. C. Barim. Basi, we cry to thee
11. RECONTR (Barim). Call him louder!
12. C. Hear our cry, O Basi!
13. RECONTR (Barim). Call him louder!
14. RECONTR and AIN (Barim). Draw near,
15. C. Cast thy burden upon the Lord (Coralia)
16. RECONTR (Barim). O Thou, who
17. AIN (Barim). Is not His word like a fire descends
18. ASOSO (Barim). Woe unto them who
19. RECONTR (Trinar). O man of God, help thy
20. RECONTR (Barim) with C. Barim. O Lord, Thou hast overthrown these
21. C. Thanks be to God!

PART II

10. RECONTR (Barim). Night falleth
11. C. Round me
12. RECONTR (Barim). Arie, now!
13. C. Behold, God the Lord
14. RECONTR (Contra) and Quarti (C. Barim). Holy is God the Lord
15. C. Go, return upon thy way
16. RECONTR (Barim). I go on my way
17. ASOSO (Barim). For the mountains
18. C. Then did Elijah
19. AIN (Barim). Then shall the righteous
20. RECONTR (Barim). Night falleth
21. TAO (Soprano). Lift thin
eyes
22. C. He, watching over Israel
23. RECONTR (Contra). Arie, Elijah
24. RECONTR (Contra). O Lord, I have
25. AIN (Contra). O rest in the Lord
26. C. He shall endure

(Barim)

Elijah

1. C. O Lord, I have
2. RECONTR (Contra). I turn my ear to the
3. C. Give me thy son
4. RECONTR (Contra). Give me thy son
5. RECONTR (Quarti). For He shall give his
6. RECONTR (Contra). Now Chorich's
7. RECONTR (Soprano). What have I do
8. RECONTR (Rasa). Give me thy son
9. C. Blessed are the men who fear Him
10. RECONTR (Barim. with C. Barim. As God the Lord of Sabachs

PART I

10. C. Barim. Basi, we cry to thee
11. RECONTR (Barim). Call him louder!
12. C. Hear our cry, O Basi!
13. RECONTR (Barim). Call him louder!
14. RECONTR and AIN (Barim). Draw near,
15. C. Cast thy burden upon the Lord (Coralia)
16. RECONTR (Barim). O Thou, who
17. AIN (Barim). Is not His word like a fire descends
18. ASOSO (Barim). Woe unto them who
19. RECONTR (Trinar). O man of God, help thy
20. RECONTR (Barim) with C. Barim. O Lord, Thou hast overthrown these
21. C. Thanks be to God!

PART II

10. RECONTR (Barim). Night falleth
11. C. Round me
12. RECONTR (Barim). Arie, now!
13. C. Behold, God the Lord
14. RECONTR (Contra) and Quarti (C. Barim). Holy is God the Lord
15. C. Go, return upon thy way
16. RECONTR (Barim). I go on my way
17. ASOSO (Barim). For the mountains
18. C. Then did Elijah
19. AIN (Barim). Then shall the righteous
20. RECONTR (Barim). Night falleth
21. TAO (Soprano). Lift thin
eyes
22. C. He, watching over Israel
23. RECONTR (Contra). Arie, Elijah
24. RECONTR (Contra). O Lord, I have
25. AIN (Contra). O rest in the Lord
26. C. He shall endure
FIRST PART

Introduction: Return—Eliah

As God the Lord of Israel, before whom I stand, there shall not be dews rain these years, but according to my word. (I Kings XVII 1)

Overview

1. Cherub—The People
Help, Lord, with thy quick destroy! The harvest now is over, the summer days are gone, and yet no power cometh to help us! Will then they bring God more sin in Zion? (Jeremiah XXXVII 18)

Revelation Cherub

The deeps afford no water, and the rivers are exhausted! The buckling's nose is cleft to the ground. The children ask for bread; and there is none breaketh that to feed them! (I Kings XVII 2)

2. Dust and Cherub—The People
Lord! How thin car our to prayer! (Deut Soprano, Contraalto)

Zaccheus spreadeth his hands for aid; and there is neither help nor comfort, (Psalms LXXXVI 1, LXXXVI 2)

Revelation Cherub—Oblivish

Ye people, rend your earth, and your garments, for your transgression against the Lord! (Papal Antiphon)

I am afraid ye shall be forgotten, as these children ask for bread; and there is none breaketh that to feed them! (I Kings XVII 2)

4. Air—Tesor

With all your hearts ye truly say, ye shall ever satisfy find Me. Thus saith the God. Off that I know where I might find Him, that I might even come before His presence. (Deut. IV 24, Jer. XXXII 5)

5. Cherub—The People
Yet deth the Lord see it not: He mocketh at His; His curse hath fallen down upon us, His wrath will pursue us, till He destroy us! (Isaiah XXXVII 18, Exodus XXV 8)

6. Return—An Angel (Contralto)
Eliah getteth bese, else, Eliah departeth to eastward: thousand hide they by Christ's brook. There shall drink it his waters; and the Lord God hath commanded the rivers to ford against the earth, and according unto His word. (Psalms LXXII 18, Exodus XXV 8)

7. Semi-Cherub—Angels
For He shall give His angels charge over them; that they protect them in all ways thou goest; that their hands shall uphold and guide thee, but thou dast not thy face against the sword of thy persecutors. (Psalms XCI 18, Exodus XXV 8)

Revelation An Angel (Contralto)

Now Chorish's brook is dipp'd up, Eliah, arise and depart, and get thee to Zarephath; therein shall Eliah have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. And the bearish of sole shall not waste, neither shall the crust of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sheddeth rain upon the earth. (Psalms XCI 18, Exodus XXV 8)

8. Return, Air—Dust—The People (Soprano)
What have I to do with thee, or man of God? art thou come to me to call my sins?—or say my sins art thou come?—or say, help me, man of God? My son is sick; and he is sick in soreness, that there is no breath left in him! (I Kings XVII 13, Psalms XCI 18)

Revelation, Air—Dust—The People (Soprano)

Give me thy son. Turn unto her, O Lord my God, O turn in mercy; hereby may help this widow's son. For thou art great, and full of compassion, and merciful in mercy. Lord, my God, let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live! (I Kings XVII 14, Psalms XCI 18)
FIRST PART

Introduction: Recitatio—Eliphaz

The Judgment of God toward the Lord, according to whom, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

[Psalm XIV 1-3:1]

1. The Lord—The People

Help, Lord, that they may destroy us! The harvest now is over, and the summer days are gone, and yet no power cometh to help us! Will they then destroy us more in God? [Jeremiah VIII 18-22]

Recitatio Chorus

The deeps afford no water, and the rivers are exhausted! The shepherd’s losses are swollen: the swine are without a place, and the beasts children ask for bread; and there is no breaketh forth to feed them.

[Psalm LXXII 1-3:1]

2. Dust and Ashes—The People

Lord! How thin were our car to our prayer.

[Psalm CXXVIII 1-3:1]

3. Recitatio—Obediah

Ye people, read your hearts, and your garments, for your transgressions. . .

[Psalm LXXIX 1-3:1]

4. Ash—Terror

With all your hearts ye truly seek, ye shall ever surely find Me. Thus saith Government. Off that I know where I might find Him, that I might even some before His presence.

[Psalm IV 7-13:1]

5. Chorus—The People

Yet dwells the Lord not in My house; He mocketh at His own house: He bringeth down upon us His wrath, will perform us ill.

[Psalm XXXIII 5-7:1]

6. Recitatio—An Angel (Contralto)

Eliphaz geth thee hence; Eliphaz, depart and turn eastward; shadow忙eth by the city of the children of the third and the fourth generation of them that hate thee. His merits on thousands fall—all on all them that love Him, and keep His commandments.

[Psalm XLII 1-6:1]

7. Semi-Chorus—Angels

For He shall give His angels charge over them, that they shall protect them in all their ways; that their hands shall uphold and guide them, lest they dash thee against stones.

[Psalm XC 1-5:1]

8. Recitatio—An Angel (Contralto)

Now Cherrish's brook is dried up, Eliphaz, arise and depart, and get thee to Zemapho; shudder! shudder! the Lord hath commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. And the barren earth shall not waste, neither shall the crust of all fail, till the day that the Lord shall send rain upon the earth. [Psalm LXXVII 5-13:1]

9. Recitatio—Anno—Eliphaz

What have I to do with thee, O man of God? art thou come to me to call upon God?—O say me thy sin thou cometh thinner? Help me, my God! my son is sick! and she is sick and sore, that there is no breaketh left in him! Yet most all the day long; I toil, toil! yet none till night. See this affliction. Be this the oppressor’s help! Help my soul! there is no breaketh left in him!—Eliphaz

Give me thy son. Turn unto her, O Lord my God. O turn in mercy; in mercy help this widow’s son! For these are gracious, and full of compassion, and generous in mercy and truth. Lord, my God, let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!
MENDELSSOHN
(1809-1847)
ELIJAH

PART I

INTRODUCTION. As God the Lord (Bar-
ium)
OVERVIEW
1. Curses. Help, Lord!
2. DEUT (Soprano and Contral) with Curses. Lord, bow thine ear
3. RECONVICTIVE (Tenor). Ye people, rend your hearts
4. ARIA (Tenor). If with all your hearts
5. CURSES. Yet doth the Lord
6. RECONVICTIVE (Contralto). Elijah, get thee hence
7. DOUBLE QUARTET (on Cursed). For He shall give His angels
8. RECONVICTIVE (Contralto). Now Cherish's brook
9. RECONVICTIVE (Soprano). What have I done
10. RECONVICTIVE (Razo). Give me thy son
11. CURSES. Blessed are the men who fear Him
12. RECONVICTIVE (Baritone) with CURSES. As God the Lord of Sabaoth

PART II

11. ARIA (Soprano). Hark, ye Israel!
12. CURSES. Be not afraid
13. RECONVICTIVE (Baritone) with CURSES. The Lord hath exalted thee
14. CURSES. Woe to him!
15. RECONVICTIVE (Tenor) and RECONVICTIVE (Tenor). Man of God
16. ARIA (Baritone). It is enough
17. RECONVICTIVE (Tenor). See, now he sleepeth
18. TAZI (on Cursed). Lift thine eyes
19. CURSES. He, watching over Israel
20. RECONVICTIVE (Contralto). Arise, Elijah
21. RECONVICTIVE (Baritone). O Lord, I have laboured in vain
22. ARIA (Contralto). O rest in the Lord
23. CURSES. He shall endure

11. CURSES. Baal, we cry to thee
12. RECONVICTIVE (Baritone). Call him louder!
13. CURSES. Hear our cry, O Baal!
14. RECONVICTIVE (Baritone). Call him louder!
15. CURSES. Baal! Baal!
16. CURSES. Cast thy burden upon the Lord (CONTRATUS)
17. RECONVICTIVE (Baritone). O Thou, who maketh thine angels spirits (CONTRATUS. The fire descendeth)
18. ARIA (Baritone). Is not His word like a fire?
19. ASASO (Contralto). Woe unto them who forsake Him!
20. RECONVICTIVE (Tenor). O man of God, help thy people!
21. RECONVICTIVE (Baritone) with CURSES. O Lord, Thou hast overthrown thine enemies
22. CURSES. Thine be God to God!
As music history entered the Romantic era, the musical world witnessed a decline in interest in and quality of the form known as the oratorio. Having raised to the heights in The Seasons, and The Creation of Jocelyn Haydn, the form seemed to have run its course, although a few Romantic composers, most notably, Berlioz, Franck, and Liszt did produce some oratorios of significance. It was left for Mendelssohn to restore the oratorio to its once-festive place in the development of music.

Mendelssohn’s father considered much of his son’s music (which the world now views as masterpieces of the art) too light and imaginative to be considered as a serious effort. He continually suggested that his son might overcome this image of triviality by writing a work of substance, namely an oratorio. Thus, in 1838, St. Paul was completed and performed with much success, launching Mendelssohn into an added direction in his compositional career.

St. Paul was performed in Birmingham, England, in 1837, and the English public which had cherished the oratorio since the triumph there of Handel, received Mendelssohn with open arms. Mendelssohn became equally enchanted with the English and began to contemplate a new oratorio. He corresponded with an old friend, Pastor Julius Schubring, who with Mendelssohn’s aid compiled the libretto for a work about Elijah, possibly the greatest of all Christian martyrs. Written for the Birmingham Festival, Elijah received its premiere under Mendelssohn’s direction on August 26, 1846. The first performance met with such audience approval that eight selections of the work were encored.

Elijah seemed an ideal character for an oratorio subject. Biblical scholars have viewed Elijah as the Lord’s most favored individual. He is supposedly the only personality prior to Christ to have seen God face to face, and the events of his life and holy work are replete with the highest drama. This aspect of his chosen character was not lost on Mendelssohn. While the oratorio is often described as an opera without staging, the musical expression of many oratorios does not always capture the dramatic elements which they intend to portray. Mendelssohn, however, consciously sought to highlight the dramatic impact of Elijah. In writing of his work, the composer said, “In such a character as that of Elijah, it seems to me that the dramatic should predominate—the personality should be introduced as acting and speaking with fervor.”

The “story” of the oratorio deals with basic human conflicts set into Elijah’s unshakeable faith in his God, the Lord of Israel. The work begins with Elijah’s prophesy of the coming drought in Israel which would punish the people of Israel for forsaking their God. Then, to verify his authority as a prophet of the Lord, Elijah performs a series of miracles and humiliates the priests of the false god, Baal, whom the Israelites had come to worship in place of the Lord. The sepulchral of Baal is not without consequence for Elijah. His enemies rise up against him and he suffers great persecutions, particularly at the hands of the vengeful Jezreel. The Lord with Elijah and sends a chariot of fire to earth to take Elijah to heaven. For those familiar with the events depicted, it is not difficult to envision the possibilities for musical imagery.

The text is drawn from a broad base of Biblical history, compiled by Schubring from the Lutherian Bible and translated by William Bartholomew. The books from which material is extracted include I Kings, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Psalms, Joel, Deuteronomy, Job, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Ecclesiastes I Samuel, Matthew, and Malachi. Bartholomew approached the project with the idea of keeping the Scriptures as nearly an intact as possible. Mendelssohn apparently appreciated the success of that effort when he termed Bartholomew the “translator for oratorio.”

The music divides into two episodes, the first treating the prophecy of Elijah and the events which confirm the prophecy, and the second dealing with Elijah’s tribulation at the hands of Jezreel and his triumphant ascension to heaven in the chariot of fire.

The work opens with a recitative in which Elijah predicts the drought that will strike Israel. The orchestral overture, however, is not depicting the coming of the drought. Then in a chorale recitative followed by a duet with chorus, the people of Israel cry to the Lord for help. Obadiah reminds them of Elijah’s prophecy and tells them they must forsake their false gods and worship only the Lord. A tenor aria reveals the beginnings of a search for the Lord. In the chorale that follows the people echo the recognition of God’s omnipotence while at the same time expressing their despair over their plight brought on by the drought.

An angel then appears to Elijah and orders him to Chemath’s brook where he will have water and be fed by ravens. A chorus of angels assures Elijah of the Lord’s protection through them. When the waters of Chemath dry up, the angel reappears and orders Elijah to Zarephath where he will be cared for by a widow. While there, the Lord again allows rain to fall on the earth.

The widow calls upon Elijah to intercede with the Lord on her behalf and bring her young son back to life. Elijah calls on the Lord to let his child live. The prayer is answered, and Elijah tells the widow that all the Lord expects in return is that she feed him with her heart.

Elijah then prophesies that three years from that day he will come out of hiding, show himself to Ahab, and bear witness to the power of the Lord who will again bring rain to the earth. When Ahab encounters Elijah he asks if he is the one who troubles Israel. Elijah responds that it is the people of Israel through Ahab who bring trouble on themselves through forsaking the Lord and worshipping Baal. Elijah asks that all of Israel gather at Mount Carmel where Elijah will challenge the priest of Baal to prove the identity of the true God.

Then follows a series of numbers which depict the story of the attempts of the priests of Baal to get their idol to send fire to consume a bullock. Repeated attempts fail. Finally Elijah orders the priests to stand barefoot around the Lord to do the same, and the fire comes and consumes the offerings. Elijah orders the priest of Baal killed and commands the people to return to the Lord. Obadiah asks Elijah to ask the Lord for rain. Elijah responds. He prays for rain and sends a youth to watch the horns for signs of cloud. When nothing appears, he again reminds the people of their need to repent and give full allegiance to the Lord. A second search of the skies reveals no sign of rain, and Elijah prays again. This time a small cloud appears and grows into a rain storm. Elijah and the people thank the Lord and rejoice.

As the second part opens, the people are reminded of how the Lord responds to their needs when they worship Him and obey Him as the one true God. The memory of the people is short, however, and they allow Jezreel to incite them against Elijah. He convinces them that Elijah had really cried out against Israel and should be held responsible for all that the people had suffered. He should be brought to death.

Obadiah warns Elijah that those who flee to the wilderness. Life in the wilderness is difficult, and Elijah suffers depression, calling upon the Lord to end his life. An angel again appears to Elijah, who has a long journey to Mount Horeb. Elijah despairs that the Lord seems to have let the people stay from His will. The angel assures him that the Lord is with him. Elijah goes to Mount Horeb. There the Lord comes, after tempest, earthquake, and fire, in a still small voice. Elijah is taken to heaven in a chariot of fire which rises in a whirlwind. The people witness the entire event and recognize that Elijah was truly a man chosen of God who spoke the truth to them. The oratorio closes in a final chorus of praise.

The score stands as a model in combining sublime lyricism with strong dramatic effects. It rises to the heights of eloquence in the realism of the Biblical events, and the arias represent some of the best lyric writing in all oratorio music. One cannot miss the greatness Mendelssohn attained in this work. Elijah personifies the pinnacle of the 19th century oratorio.
MENDELSSOHN
(1809-1847)

ELIJAH

SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS

Sopranos
Paula Budgell
Ingrid Crizler
Miriam Espeneth
Theresa Labrador
Stephanie Latrop
Victoria Leslie
Margaret Penne
Joan Penney
Liesel Rembourts
Heather Smith
Susanna Walsh
Lynn Wing

Alto
Ann Bellier
Stephanie Field
Lelia Hammond
Donna Hanson
Georgia Robbrough
Nedra Stansson
Margaret Smith
Kay Verellus

Tenors
John Addison
John Baker
David Call
Ronald Carson
Morris Jellison
Jerry Sims
Peter Schneider
Deon Suess

Basses
Jay Beemster
Gary Jankowski
Jim Plagge
Bob Schlepers
Sandy Thornton

assisted by member of the
Chair of the Sound
Robert Metzger, conductor

BROADWAY CHAMBER SYMPHONY

Viola I
Michael Scott, concertmaster
Beth Schmidt
Rebecca Soukup
Eileen Laak
Fritz Klein
Phyllis Toone
Avron Malzanty
Sandra Sinney

Viola II
Pamela Carson, principal
Donna Water
Dean Druzscher
Jacqueline Cedofeita
Ellen Zieretz
Jane Cygler
Marcia McElvain
Karen Katoed

Vioa
Sam Williams, principal
Beatrice Doff
Suzanne Ruf
Robert Shangraw
Katherine McWilliams
Shari Peterson
Stephanie Reed

Cello
Kara Hummert, principal
Ron Walsh
Connie Radue
Joyce Barnes
Rebecca Beyer
Rosalyn Deiner

String Bass
Christine Howell, principal
Keith Lowe
Walter Bannum

Flute
Jill Shigley, principal
Coral Wellen-Berg

Oboe
Lisa Faulkner, principal
Huntley Beyer

Clarinet
Gary Oulès, principal
Lawrence Wilkson

Bassoon
Don Keele, principal
Dave Stangland, guest princ.
Sharon Murphy

French Horn
Maurice Cary, principal
Anita Stokes
Brent Allen
Wearth Shaffer

Trumpet
Gary Pashmore, principal
Douglas Berg

Trombone
James Harnois
Phil Heil
Greg James, bass trombone

Tuba
Forest Newton

Harmonium
Ian Alvarez

Organ
Joan Spernker

Seattle Chamber Singers
and the
Broadway Chamber Symphony
George Shangraw, conductor

Especially for Easter
J.S. Bach's
ST. MATTHEW PASSION
April 9 8:00 PM
First Presbyterian Church
For ticket information, 324-0450 or write SCS 316 10th E. 98102

Seattle Chamber Singers
and the
Broadway Chamber Symphony
George Shangraw, conductor

March 19, 1982 6:00 PM First Presbyterian Church