

MENDELSSOHN'S

ELIJAH

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT WEYMARK © AM



CONTENTS

The Program	3
Welcome	5
About the Music	6
The Words	9
About the Artists	17
Festival Chorus	22
Sydney Philharmonia Orchestra	24
About Us	25
Our Supporters and Partners	26
Next at Sydney Philharmonia Choirs	28

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT WEYMARK OAM

MENDELSSOHN'S ELIJAH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

DEBORAH CHEETHAM FRAILLON and MATTHEW DOYLE

Tarimi Nulay – Long time living here[†]

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

**Elijah – an oratorio in two parts
after words from the Old Testament**

(Sung in English)

Brett Weymark conductor

Celeste Lazarenko soprano

Sian Sharp mezzo-soprano

Andrew Goodwin tenor

Teddy Tahu Rhodes bass-baritone (Elijah)

Charlie Swan treble

Kirralee Hillier, Ellen McNeil, Rebecca O'Hanlon

Emmeline Booth, Gavin Brown, Daniel Verschuer

Nick Geddes, Leon Vitogiannis

artists and alumni of Pacific Opera Studio

Festival Chorus

Sydney Philharmonia Orchestra

Saturday 18 May 2024 at 7pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

[†]100 Minutes of New Australian Music 2020 commission

Estimated durations:

68 minutes, 20-minute interval, 65 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 9:40pm

Pre-concert talk by Dr Neil McEwan AM at 6:15pm in the Northern Foyer, supported by 2MBS Fine Music

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Welcome

Mendelssohn lived through a period of extraordinary change. Political upheaval in Europe was mirrored by rapid changes in England's manufacturing cities due to the industrial revolution. In Birmingham, where *Elijah* was first heard in 1846, a Triennial Music Festival was established to raise funds for the city's General Hospital, just as Handel's *Messiah* had become a fundraiser for London's Foundling Hospital in the previous century.

The festival was an extraordinary event – a testament to the stamina of audiences as much as the performers. The first four mornings of the 1846 festival saw complete performances of Haydn's *Creation*, *Messiah* and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. When *Elijah* was premiered at 11am on the second morning, the program included coronation anthems of Handel and arias by Mozart and Cimarosa alongside what would be Mendelssohn's greatest work as well as his swansong.

What was it about the Elijah story that inspired Mendelssohn to create a work of such immense drama, power and vision, even in the midst of serious physical decline? I believe he identified with the Old Testament prophet as someone willing to call out false idols (here the rise of capitalism and of extreme nationalism, and other views that would lead to the



PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

bloodbath of the early 20th century) and to be unpopular and hold fast to his beliefs.

Mendelssohn sought to strike a balance between tradition and the zeitgeist. He sought to preserve traditions in an age intent on disregarding old values and defining new ones. I find this a strangely relatable trope and so I interpret the work more as an artistic manifesto than simply a retelling of a biblical story. We should all fight for social justice, equal access to education and equality in our society, and – my personal preoccupation – we should all insist on the arts as a fundamental human right and that our societies should be judged on our creations, the art.

Brett Weymark OAM

Artistic and Music Director

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, upon whose Country we rehearse, sing and work, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. Our voices bring to life the songs of many cultures and countries, from across the ages, in a spirit of sharing, learning and understanding. The ancient customs and cultures of this land inspire us to create harmony – in music and in our society.

About the Music

Elijah: The Masterpiece of German Romantic Oratorio

Mendelssohn should be regarded neither as a follower of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, failing by their standards, or as a musical Victorian, accommodating the tastes of English audiences of his day. His masterpieces avoid these strictures. They include orchestral music, the Violin Concerto and the *Scottish* and *Italian* symphonies, and chamber music, notably the marvellous String Octet.

Yet, if asked which were his most important works, Mendelssohn probably would have named the oratorios, *St Paul* (1836) and *Elijah* (1847). Since his death, the composer's judgment of their value has been undermined, the result of a complete change in the institutional and intellectual context of music-making, beginning almost as soon as *Elijah* was composed.

Cantatas, odes and oratorios, whether on secular or sacred subjects, were staples of early 19th-century concert life, and the institutions which existed to perform them were able to field orchestras and choirs as required. Carl Dahlhaus, in *Nineteenth-Century Music* (1980), emphasises that oratorio, for that era, was concert music, whether the subject was sacred or secular. The middle- and upper-class audiences supporting oratorio performances tended to regard the concert hall as a church, and art as embodying the substance of religion. Mendelssohn's cultivated banker father, an ideal representative of these classes, considered religious music the ultimate. He was the Mendelssohn who converted from Judaism to Christianity.

A Thrilling Picture

Elijah's German librettist, a Protestant pastor from Dessau, Julius Schubring, sent Mendelssohn his plan for Part I of *Elijah* on

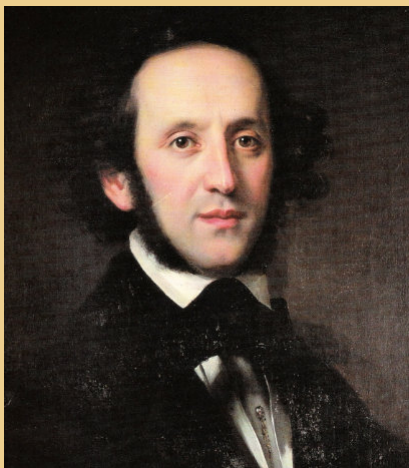
31 October 1838, with the comment: 'I have sought throughout – although it is not always possible – to introduce pieces, not merely suitable to the particular situation in question, but such as might awaken an echo in the hearts of the hearers.' The next day he wrote: '...the thing is becoming too objective – an interesting, even a thrilling picture, but far from edifying the heart of the listener...'

Mendelssohn clearly wanted the 'thrilling picture', and replied: 'I figured to myself *Elijah* as a thorough prophet, such as we might again require in our own day – energetic and zealous, but also stern, wrathful, and gloomy...I would fain see the dramatic element more prominent, as well as more exuberant and defined – appeal and rejoinder, question and answer, sudden interruptions, etc. etc...The personages should act and speak as if they were living beings – for heaven's sake let them not be a musical picture, but a real world such as you find in every chapter of the Old Testament'. The failure of composer and librettist to agree on a mode for the libretto is one reason nothing more was done on *Elijah* for another six years.

A Bilingual Oratorio

Long before the commission for the Birmingham Festival of 1846, then, Mendelssohn was planning an *Elijah* oratorio. Mendelssohn was thinking of audiences in Germany, where he was also very highly regarded. The choice of an Old Testament subject, sometimes related to English oratorio societies' near-worship of Handel, can be explained much more readily by noting that such subjects predominated among German oratorios of Mendelssohn's day.

Mendelssohn's mission was to bring England the best of which the German



musical world was capable. With typically thorough care he composed *Elijah* to what was, in effect, a bilingual libretto, much as Haydn had composed his *Creation*. (Mendelssohn's oratorio is known as *Elias* when it's performed in German.) Mendelssohn corresponded intensively, in English, with William Bartholomew, who made the English singing translation of Schubring's text. Mendelssohn took a detailed interest in the English words, and made many revisions after the first performance. The English version is therefore definitive for performances in English-speaking countries.

‘Would that not be splendid...?’

It was apparently Bartholomew who, after discussion with Mendelssohn's friend Karl Klingemann, suggested placing the overture, descriptive of the misery of famine, *between* *Elijah*'s announcement of the curse, which begins the oratorio, and the chorus describing the people's misery. (*Elijah*'s recitative prophesying the drought has a sinister descending interval reappearing later as a kind of 'curse motive'.) The choruses in *Elijah* carry the burden of description. The original idea seems to have come to Mendelssohn from a passage in the First Book of Kings, beginning with the words 'and behold, the Lord passed by' (see the chorus which is No.34 of the oratorio). 'Would not that be splendid for an oratorio?' he exclaimed.

Elijah contains choral material summing up the religious meaning of the drama, but Mendelssohn's way of integrating this material into the unfolding of the piece represents a real discovery. The confrontation between *Elijah* and the prophets of Baal, for example, has a sustained and imaginative series of choruses. moving from vivid dramatic

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847) is often called the 19th-century Mozart: he was a child prodigy, composing masterpieces such as the *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture and the Octet as a teenager; his music has a classical sensibility; and he died in his 30s, his tremendous activity as composer, pianist, conductor and administrator having taken its toll on a fragile constitution. For others, Mendelssohn is associated with the Victorian age – he was popular in England and on friendly terms with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Viewed from a third angle, there is his interest in music of the past, including 'old-fashioned' composers such as Handel. Mendelssohn was behind the 19th-century revival of Bach's *St Matthew* Passion.

Felix was the luckiest of prodigies: he grew up in comfortable surroundings, with sensible parents and every conceivable opportunity. From his grandfather, the philosopher Moses, came culture and intellectual prestige; from his father Abraham (a banker), the family acquired wealth and social status. Among the opportunities of privilege was the chance to travel. And when he was 20, Mendelssohn set off on a Grand Tour of Europe, from which emerged some of his most popular orchestral works, the *Scottish* and *Italian* symphonies and *The Hebrides*.

representation to prayerful contemplation and back. The variety and continuity of choral and orchestral textures was novel, original. It influenced Wagner's *Parsifal*, and also the greatest oratorio by an Englishman, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*. (Elgar once took George Bernard Shaw to task for his dismissive attitude towards *Elijah*, guiding him through the score to demonstrate Mendelssohn's mastery.)

Narrative and Drama

Gaps in the story-telling have often been criticised in *Elijah*. In Schubring's libretto it is sometimes hard to tell who the chorus and soloists are supposed to represent at that moment. This throws the audience back on their word-books, but they would have expected to be asked to participate in this way (and knew their Bible). Narrative recitative was characteristic of the Bach Passions, and to a lesser extent of Handel's oratorios. Nineteenth-century aesthetic theory, on the other hand, saw no problem with mixing lyric, epic and dramatic forms. Narrative could be achieved by depiction, plot by dialogue, reflection by solos for observers, preaching by the chorus – all in the same work, in the concert hall.

The widow's scene in *Elijah* sticks out – its operatic presentation seems foreign to the genre as Mendelssohn conceived it. The 'scenes' in *Elijah* are of a different kind: epic tableaux, fused into a cohesive whole. The first part of the work is on the whole the more compelling. Schubring delivered text for the second part very close to the deadline. In spring 1846 Mendelssohn wrote to his sister Fanny: 'I am more driven than ever, as an immense part of *Elijah* is not yet copied, whilst the first part is already in rehearsal in England.'

The second part bears more of the imprint of Schubring's ideas. In contrast to the dramatic narrative of the first half it tends toward to the lyrical, static rather than dramatic, with uplifting texts and very

little plot. Schubring insisted: 'the oratorio can have not other than a New Testament ending. Elijah must help to transform the old into the new covenant – that gives him great historical importance.' It is unlikely that Mendelssohn disagreed. Yet Mendelssohn's focus on the Old Testament story helped to maintain the popularity of *Elijah* in England, where Handel's oratorios were venerated. In fact, *Elijah* is closer to *Messiah*, linking the Old and New Testaments, and arranged in cumulative episodes, than to the story-telling of an oratorio like Handel's *Saul*.

After Elijah...

Elijah's mixture of religious edification, entertainment, and massed musical forces of soloists, choir and orchestra arose out of the uneasy partnership of the bourgeoisie with the upper classes which preceded the 1848 revolutions in Germany. The concert-giving institutions jointly supported by these classes gave way, after 1848, to purely middle-class subscription-based concerts, with symphonies and concertos as the focus rather than oratorios.

The popularity of Mendelssohn's oratorios in Germany waned. In England, the social classes were not forced apart (thus King Charles III sang in the Bach Choir, founded 100 years before under royal patronage). *Elijah* has come to be seen as typical of Victorian era in England, but should be seen as the masterpiece of the German romantic oratorio of the first half of the 19th century, and as Mendelssohn's most ambitious work, an attempt to fulfil the highest aspirations he shared with the musical elite of his place and time.

David Garrett © 2003/2014

Elijah was commissioned by the Birmingham Festival, where Mendelssohn had conducted his *St Paul* in 1837 and *Hymn of Praise* in 1840. The premiere took place in Birmingham Town Hall on 26 August 1846, conducted by the composer.

The Words

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

TARIMI NULAY – LONG TIME LIVING HERE

Tarimi nulay ngalawa yura
garrabarra baraya yagu barrabugu
ngyiningi ngara
ngyiningi berong

*Long time here live the people
dancing and singing today and tomorrow,
your way of knowing
your way of belonging*

Words by Deborah Cheetham Fraillon, translated into Gadigal by Matthew Doyle

ELIJAH

PART ONE

Introduction (Recitative)

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 Kings 17: 1)

Overture

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?

(Jeremiah 8: 19, 20)

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!

(1 Kings 17: 7; Lamentations 4: 4)

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.

(Psalm 86: 1; Lament. 1: 17)

3. Recitative

OBADIAH

Ye people, rend your hearts, and not your
garments, for your transgressions the
Prophet Elijah hath sealed the heavens
through the word of God. I therefore say to
ye, forsake your idols, return to God; for he
is slow to anger, and merciful, and kind and
gracious, and repenteth Him of the evil.

(Joel 2: 12, 13)

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.

(Deuteronomy 4: 29; Job 23: 3)

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 fourth generation
of them that hate Him. His mercies on
thousands fall – fall on them that love Him,
and keep His commandments.

(Deuteronomy 28: 22; Exodus 20: 5, 6)

6. Recitative

AN ANGEL

Elijah! get thee hence; 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.

(1 Kings 27: 3, 4)

7. Double Quartet

ANGELS

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

(Psalm 91: 11, 12)

Recitative

AN ANGEL

Now Cherith's brook is dried up, Elijah arise and depart, and get thee to Zarephath; 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 curse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

(1 Kings 17: 7, 9, 14)

8. Duet

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

THE WIDOW

Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee?

ELIJAH

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

THE WIDOW

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

ELIJAH

Now behold, thy son liveth!

THE WIDOW

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

DUET

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

(1 Kings 17: 17, 18, 21–24; Job 10: 15;

Psalms 38: 6, 6: 7, 10: 14, 86: 15–16; 88: 10;

128: 1; 112: 1, 4)

9. Chorus

THE PEOPLE

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.

(Psalms 128: 1; 112: 1, 4)

10. Recitative and Chorus

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, are thou he that troubleth Israel?

CHORUS

Thou art Elijah, he that troubleth Israel!

ELIJAH

I never troubled Israel's peace: it is thou, Ahab, and all thy father's house. Ye have forsaken God's commandments; 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.

CHORUS

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 then will call on the Lord Jehovah: and the God who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

CHORUS

Yes: 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.

(1 Kings 18: 1, 15, 18, 19, 23–25)

11. Double Chorus

PRIESTS OF BAAL

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

12. Recitative and 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.

PRIESTS OF BAAL

Hear our cry, O Baal! now arise! wherefore slumber?

13. Recitative and Chorus

ELIJAH

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

PRIESTS OF BAAL

Hear and answer Baal! Mark! how the scorner derideth us! Hear and answer!
(1 Kings 18: 1, 15, 17–19, 23–29)

14. Recitative and Aria

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 I am Thy servant! O show to all this people that I have done these things according to Thy word! O hear me, Lord, and answer me; and show this people that Thou art Lord God; and let their heart again be turned!

(1 Kings 18: 30, 36, 37)

15. 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!

(Psalms 55: 22, 16: 8, 108: 5, 25: 3)

16. Recitative and Chorus

ELIJAH

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

(Psalm 104: 4)

THE PEOPLE

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

(1 Kings xviii 38, 39)

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!

(1 Kings 18: 40)

17. 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.

(Jeremiah 23: 29; Psalm 7: 11, 12)

18. Arioso

(MEZZO-SOPRANO)

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.

(Hosea 7: 13)

19. Recitative, Aria and 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 YOUTH

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 YOUTH

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

ELIJAH

Hearst thou no sign of rain? – seest thou
nothing arise from the deep?

THE YOUTH

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 YOUTH

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!

(Jeremiah 14: 22; Chronicles 6: 19, 26, 27; Deuteronomy 28: 23; Psalms 28: 1, 106: 1; 1 Kings 18: 43, 45)

20. Chorus

THE PEOPLE

Thanks be to Go! He laveth the thirsty land! The waters gather; they rush along; they are lifting their voices! The stormy billows are high; their fury is mighty. But the Lord is above them, and Almighty!

(Psalm 93: 3, 4)

INTERVAL

PART TWO

21. Aria

(SOPRANO)

Hear ye, Israel; hear what the Lord speaketh: 'Oh, hadst thou heeded my commandments!'

Who hath believed our report; to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed!

Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him oppressed by

tyrants: thus saith the Lord: - I am He that comforteth; be not afraid, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee. Say, who art thou, that thou art afraid of a man that shall die; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, who hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the earth's foundations? Be not afraid, for thy God will strengthen thee.

(Isaiah 48: 1, 18; 53: 1; 49: 7; 41: 10; 51: 12,13)

22. Chorus

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

(Isaiah 41: 10; Psalm 91: 7)

23. 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 to thee to walk in the sins of Jeroboam. Thou hast made an altar to Baal, and served him and worshipped him. Thou hast killed the righteous, and also taken possession. And the Lord shall smight all Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He shall give Israel up, and thou shalt know He is the Lord.

(1 Kings 14: 7, 9, 15; 41: 30-33)

THE QUEEN

Have ye not heard he hath prophesied against all Israel?

CHORUS

We heard it with our ears

THE QUEEN

Hath he not prophesied against the king of Israel?

CHORUS

We heard it with our ears.

THE QUEEN

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

CHORUS

He shall perish!

THE QUEEN

Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets?

CHORUS

He shall perish!

THE QUEEN

Yea, by the sword he destroyed them all!

CHORUS

He destroyed them all!

THE QUEEN

He also closed the heavens!

CHORUS

He also closed the heavens!

THE QUEEN

And called down a famine upon the land.

CHORUS

And called down a famine upon the land.

24. Chorus

THE PEOPLE

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! He hath spoken falsely against our land and us, as we have heard with our ears. So go ye forth; seize on him! He shall die!

(Jeremiah 26: 9, 11; 1 Kings 17: 10, 19: 2, 21: 7; Ecclesiastes 48: 2, 3)

25. 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.

(2 Kings 1: 13; Jeremiah 5: 3, 26: 11; Psalm 59: 3; 1 Kings 19: 4; Deuteronomy 31: 6; Exodus 12: 32; 1 Samuel 17: 37)

26. Aria

ELIJAH

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

(Job 7: 16; 1 Kings 19: 10)

27. 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.

(1 Kings 19: 5; Psalm 34: 7)

28. Trio

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.

(Psalm 121: 1, 3)

29. Chorus

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

(Psalms 121: 4; 138: 7)

30. Recitative

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.

(1 Kings 19: 7, 8)

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!

(Isaiah 49: 4; 24: 2; 63: 17; 1 Kings 19: 4)

31. Aria

(MEZZO-SOPRANO)

O 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.

(Psalm 37 1, 7)

32. Chorus

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

(Matthew 24: 13)

33. 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.

(Psalm 143: 6, 7; 1 Kings 19: 11)

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.

(1 Kings 19: 11, 12)

35. Recitative, Quartet and Chorus

Above Him stood the Seraphim, and one cried to another: Holy, holy, holy is God the Lord – Lord Sabaoth!

Now His glory hath filled all the earth.

(Isaiah 6: 15, 18)

36. Chorus

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.

(1 Kings 19: 15, 18)

Recitative

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.

(Psalms 71: 16; 16: 9)

37. Arioso

ELIJAH

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but Thy kindness shall not depart from me, neither shall the covenant of Thy peace be removed.

(Isaiah 54: 10)

38. Chorus

Then did Elijah the prophet break forth like a fire; his words appeared like burning torches. Mighty kings by him were overthrown. He stood on the mount of Sinai, and heard the judgements of the future; and in Horeb, its vengeance. And when the Lord would take him away to heaven, lo! there came a fiery chariot, with fiery horses; and he went by a whirlwind to heaven.

(Ecclesiastes 48: 1, 6, 7; 2 Kings 2: 1, 11)

39. Aria

(TENOR)

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

(Matthew 13: 43; Isaiah 51: 11)

40. Recitative

(SOPRANO)

Behold, God hath sent Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children unto their fathers; lest the Lord shall come and smite the earth with a curse.

(Malachi 4: 5, 6)

41. Chorus

But the Lord, from the north has raised one, who, from the rising of the sun, shall call upon His name, and come on princes. Behold my servant, and mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth! On him the spirit of God shall rest: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of might and of counsel, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

(Isaiah 41: 25; 42: 1; 11: 2)

Quartet

O come everyone that thirsteth, O come to the waters: O come unto Him. O hear, and your souls shall live for ever.

(Isaiah 55: 1, 3)

42. Chorus

And then shall your light shine forth as the light of the morning breaketh; and your health shall speedily be restored; and the glory of the Lord ever shall reward you. Lord, our Creator, how excellent Thy name is in all the nations!

Thou fillest heaven with Thy glory. Amen.

(Isaiah 58: 8; Psalm 8: 1)

Text derived from the Lutheran Bible

by Julius Schubring

English version by William Bartholomew

About the Artists

Brett Weymark conductor

One of Australia's foremost choral conductors, Brett Weymark OAM was appointed Artistic and Music Director in 2003, and he has conducted the Choirs throughout Australia as well as internationally. He has also conducted the Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland, West Australian and Tasmanian symphony orchestras, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Sydney Youth Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic, as well as productions for WAAPA, Pacific Opera and OzOpera, and he has performed with Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera, Australian Chamber Orchestra, The Song Company and Musica Viva.

He studied singing and conducting at the University of Sydney and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, continuing his conducting studies with Simon Halsey, Vance George, Daniel Barenboim and John Eliot Gardiner, amongst others.

His repertoire at SPC has included Bach's Passions and Christmas Oratorio, the Mozart, Verdi, Duruflé and Fauré requiems, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. He champions Australian composers, and has premiered works by Matthew Hindson, Elena Kats-Chernin, John Peterson, Daniel Walker, Rosalind Page, Peter Sculthorpe, Andrew Schultz and Ross Edwards. In 2011 he premiered his own work *Brighton to Bondi* with the Festival Chorus. He has also conducted musical theatre programs including Bernstein's *Candide*, which won multiple BroadwayWorld Sydney awards.



PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

Under his direction, SPC received a Helpmann Award for *Oedipus Rex* and *Symphony of Psalms*, directed by Peter Sellars, and was nominated for a Limelight Award for Purcell's *King Arthur*.

He was chorus master for the Adelaide Festival productions of *Saul* (2017), *Hamlet* (2018) and *Requiem* (2020), and he has prepared choirs for Charles Mackerras, Zubin Mehta, Edo de Waart, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Simon Rattle. He has recorded for the ABC and conducted film scores for *Happy Feet*, *Mad Max Fury Road* and *Australia*.

Recent conducting highlights include *Sweeney Todd* (West Australian Opera), *Jandamarra* by Paul Stanhope and Steve Hawke (SSO), Michael Tippett's *A Child Of Our Time* (Adelaide Festival) and *Carousel* (State Opera South Australia).

In 2001 he was awarded an Australian Centenary Medal and in 2021 the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Brett Weymark is passionate about singing and the role music plays in both the wellbeing of individuals and the health and vitality of a community's culture. He believes music can transform lives and should be accessible to all.

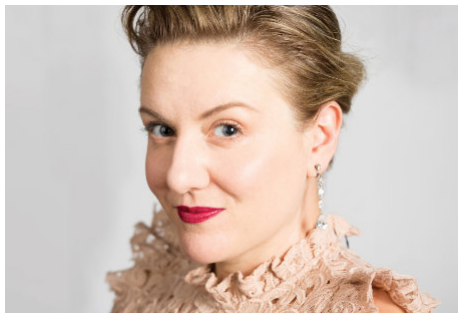


PHOTO: LOUIS DILLON SAVAGE



Celeste Lazarenko soprano

A graduate of both the Guildhall in London and the Sydney Conservatorium, Celeste Lazarenko has appeared with English National Opera, Opera North, Opéra Angers-Nantes, Opera Australia, Victorian Opera, Pinchgut Opera and Sydney Chamber Opera. She has also appeared with the Sydney, Queensland and New Zealand symphony orchestras, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and the Australian Haydn Ensemble.

In Australia, she has sung the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Victorian Opera); Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* (Sydney Chamber Opera); and Têlaire in Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*, Medea in Cavalli's *Giasone* and Leonore in Grétry's *L'amant jaloux*, all for Pinchgut Opera. She has also toured for Opera Australia as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and Pamina in *The Magic Flute*.

In 2023, she sang Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and The Woodbird in *Siegfried* as part of Opera Australia's *Ring* cycle, Elle in *La Voix humaine* for Sydney Chamber Opera, and for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs she appeared as the Israelite Woman and Dalila in Handel's *Samson* and as a soloist in Mahler 8 with ChorusOz.

This season she sings Ilia in *Idomeneo* and Pamina in *The Magic Flute* (Opera Australia), and her concert appearances include Heavenly Sopranos (Australian Haydn Ensemble), Mahler 4 (Canberra Symphony Orchestra) and Mozart's Requiem (Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra).

Sian Sharp mezzo-soprano

In 2023, dynamic and celebrated Australian mezzo-soprano Sian Sharp reprised the roles of Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) and Giovanna and Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), and featured as La Muse in Damiano Michieletto's new production of *The Tales of Hoffmann* for Opera Australia. She also appeared for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs in Mahler 8.

This season, she continues her association with Opera Australia, appearing as Dodo (*Breaking the Waves*), La Zelatrice (*Suor Angelica*) and Second Lady (*The Magic Flute*). Concert appearances will include Rossweisse (*Die Walküre*) for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

Her many appearances for Opera Australia include Carmen, Amneris (*Aida*), Marchesa Melibea (*Il viaggio a Reims*), Dulcinée (*Don Quichotte*), Waltraute and Siegrune (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*), Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*), Stéphane (*Roméo et Juliette*), Nancy (*Albert Herring*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*) and Emilia (*Otello*).

Concert highlights have included *Messiah* (Queensland Symphony Orchestra), Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (SSO), Mary in *The Flying Dutchman* (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra), and for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Bach's *St John Passion*, *Elijah* and *The Dream of Gerontius*.



Andrew Goodwin tenor

Andrew Goodwin has performed with opera companies and orchestras in Europe, Asia and Australia, including the Bolshoi Opera, Gran Theatre Liceu Barcelona, Teatro Real Madrid, La Scala Milan, Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera, Sydney Chamber Opera, St Petersburg Philharmonic, Auckland Philharmonia, the Moscow and Melbourne chamber orchestras, and the New Zealand, Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland, Adelaide, Tasmanian and West Australian symphony orchestras, and as well as in recital with Daniel de Borah at Wigmore Hall and the Oxford Lieder, Port Fairy and Canberra International Music festivals.

Recent engagements have included Handel's *Il trionfo* with Yulia Lezhneva and Dmitry Sinkovsky (Moscow), Beethoven Nine (Brandenburg State Orchestra), Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Adelaide Festival), Jacquino in *Fidelio* (WASO), Nadir in *The Pearlfishers* (State Opera South Australia), *Diary of One Who Disappeared* and *Rape of Lucretia* (Sydney Chamber Opera), *Artaxerxes* (Pinchgut), and for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Bach's Christmas Oratorio.

In March he returned to the Adelaide Festival to sing Renaud in Stravinsky's *Nightingale* and appeared in Fauré's Requiem for SPC. This season he also returns to Melbourne Bach Choir for Bach's Easter and Ascension oratorios, and will appear with each of the Australian symphony orchestras in repertoire ranging from *Messiah*, Mozart's Requiem and Beethoven Nine to Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*.



Teddy Tahu Rhodes bass-baritone

Australia's favourite international star of opera and music theatre has performed with some of the greatest opera companies of the world including Opera Australia, Hamburg State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Theater an der Wien, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera and New York City Opera.

He is a regular guest with all the major Australasian orchestras, and has performed with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs on numerous occasions. He first sang Elijah in 2007 with the Auckland Philharmonia; his most recent Sydney appearance in the role was in 2022 with the Willoughby Symphony.

Concert platform highlights include recitals in Washington DC, three national tours with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the BBC Proms, and his Carnegie Hall debut (2009).

His accolades include an ARIA (Best Classical Record for *The Voice*), a Green Room Award for Best Male Artist in a Leading Role (for Don Giovanni), two Helpmann Awards, a MO Award (Operatic Performer of the Year) and the Laureate Award for the Arts Foundation Te Tumu Toi.

Most recently, he has performed in *Cenerentola*, *Capriccio* and Mozart's Requiem (Victorian Opera), Opera by the Lakes (Gippsland Opera), Opera in the Quarry (West Australian Opera), an Australian concert tour with Guy Noble, and *The Little Prince* (Freeze Frame Opera). This year he joins the Classical Voice faculty of the University of Adelaide's Elder Conservatorium of Music.

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Charlie Swan treble

Thirteen-year-old Charlie Swan was born in Chile and now lives in Sydney where he attends St Andrew's Cathedral School. He has been a member of the Cathedral Choir for two-and-a-half years under the tutelage of Ross Cobb and is the Dean's Chorister.

He has sung several solos with the choir, his favourite being Allegri's Miserere with its top Cs. He also plays piano. Charlie loves fishing, riding his mountain bike, going to the beach, and singing.

In this performance of *Elijah* he sings the part of the Youth, heard in No.19.



Pacific Opera Studio

Cheryl Barker AO and Peter Coleman-Wright AO

Co-Artistic Directors



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Ellen McNeil

MEZZO-SOPRANOS

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With more than 300 participants since its inception in 2009, Pacific Opera Studio has played a fundamental and vital role in the professional growth of emerging opera singers working both in Australia and internationally, and has acquired an outstanding reputation for developing the next generation of Australian opera singers.

Pacific Opera Studio provides essential vocational training and performance experience – bridging the gap between tertiary education and achieving professional engagements with opera companies in

Australia and development opportunities abroad.

Pacific Opera Studio is led by its Co-Artistic Directors – international opera singers Peter Coleman-Wright AO, Cheryl Barker AO – and Musical Director Bradley Gilchrist. In recent years the program has grown to include concerts, recitals, opera scenes, masterclasses with industry professionals and fully staged versions of opera favourites.

The octet of consort soloists in this concert are Pacific Opera Studio alumni or current participants in the 2024 program.



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Tim Cunniffe Assistant Chorus Master and Principal Rehearsal Pianist

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Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs presents the art of choral singing at the highest standard, and develops the talents of those with a passion for singing, in Sydney and beyond. Founded in 1920, it has become Australia's finest choral organisation and is a Resident Company of the Sydney Opera House.

Led by Artistic and Music Director Brett Weymark OAM and Associate Music Director Dr Elizabeth Scott, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs comprises three auditioned and three community choirs that perform repertoire from choral classics to musical theatre and commissions by Australian composers. SPC presents its own annual concert season as well as collaborating with leading conductors, soloists and orchestras in Australia and overseas. In 2002, SPC was the first Australian choir to sing at the BBC Proms (Mahler's Symphony No.8 under Sir Simon Rattle), returning again in 2010 to celebrate its 90th anniversary. The Choirs perform in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's season every year, as they have done for more than 80 years. SPC also presents community singing events – Chorus Oz and singing workshops throughout Sydney and NSW.

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs' centenary in 2020 saw the realisation of an inspiring commissioning project – 100 Minutes of New Australian Music – featuring works by composers including Elena Kats-Chernin, Deborah Cheetham Fraillon and Brett Dean. In 2023 Brett Weymark celebrated his 20th anniversary as Artistic Director.

The 2024 season includes performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Ethel Smyth's Mass in D major, Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil, and, with ChorusOz, Karl Jenkins' *Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* together with a commission by Katie Noonan and Andrew O'Connor.

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