



# NEWBURY CHORAL SOCIETY

**St Nicolas Church, Newbury**  
**Saturday 24th March 2001**



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# Newbury Choral Society

116th Season

## ELIJAH

MENDELSSOHN

ELIJAH	JONATHAN LEMALU:	BASS
OBADIAH AHAB	VERNON KIRK:	TENOR
ANGEL QUEEN	DEBORAH MILES-JOHNSON:	MEZZO-SOPRANO
WIDOW SECOND ANGEL	INGRID ATTROT:	SOPRANO
YOUTH	SUSAN YOUNG	SOPRANO
TRIO	PHILLIPA HOBSON	SOPRANO
	ANTONIA ROGERS	ALTO
	CHRIS HALEK	ALTO

**THE LONDON CONCERTANTE**

LEADER: DAVID WAY

**CONDUCTOR: JANET LINCÉ**

# Programme

## Elijah ..... Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

Introduction	Elijah	As God the Lord of Israel liveth
Overture		
1. Chorus		Help, Lord
2. Duet and Chorus		Lord, bow Thine ear to our prayer
3. Recitative	Obadiah	Ye people, rend your hearts
4. Air	Obadiah	If with all your hearts
5. Chorus		Yet doth the Lord see it not ...
6. Recitative	An Angel	Elijah, get thee hence ... ..
7. Chorus		For He shall give his angels charge over thee
8. Recitative	An Angel	Now Cherith's brook is dried up
9. Recitative, Air and Duet	Widow / Elijah	What have I to do with thee, O man of God?
10. Chorus		Blessed are the men who fear Him
11. Recitative and Chorus	Elijah / Ahab	As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth
12. Double Chorus		Baal, we cry to thee
13. Recitative	Elijah	Call him louder
14. Chorus		Hear our cry, O Baal
15. Recitative	Elijah	Call him louder
16. Chorus		Baal, hear and answer
17. Air	Elijah	Lord God of Abraham
18. Quartet		Cast thy burden upon the Lord
19. Recitative	Elijah	O Thou, who makest Thine angels spirits
20. Chorus		The fire descends from heaven
		Is not His word like a fire?
		Woe unto them who forsake Him
		O man of God, help thy people ...
		O Lord, Thou hast overthrown Thine enemies
		Thanks be to God

## *Interval - 15 minutes*

**Refreshments provided by Christian Aid, Thatcham.**

21. Air	Soprano	Hear ye, Israel
22. Chorus		Be not afraid
23. Recitative and Chorus	Elijah / Queen	The Lord hath exalted thee
24. Chorus		Woe to him
25. Recitative	Obadiah	Man of God
26. Air	Elijah	It is enough
27. Recitative	Tenor	See, now he sleepeth
28. Trio		Lift thine eyes
29. Chorus		He, watching over Israel

30. Recitative	Angel / Elijah	Arise, Elijah
31. Air	Angel	O rest in the Lord
32. Chorus		He that shall endure to the end
33. Recitative	Elijah / Angel 2	Night falleth round me
34. Chorus		Behold, God the Lord passed by
35. Recitative, Quartet and Chorus		Holy, Holy, Holy
36. Chorus		Go, return upon thy way
Recitative	Elijah	I go on my way in the strength of the Lord
37. Air	Elijah	For the mountains shall depart
38. Chorus		Then did Elijah
39. Air	Tenor	Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun
40. Recitative	Soprano	Behold, God hath sent Elijah
41. Chorus		But the Lord, from the north has raised one
Quartet		O come every one that thirsteth
42. Chorus		And then shall your light break forth

**M**endelssohn was 36 when he was invited both to conduct the 1846 Birmingham Festival and to provide a new oratorio for the occasion. He had already been considering writing an oratorio based on the dramatic events depicted in the First Book of Kings which surround the prophet Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The Birmingham invitation therefore gave him the opportunity to put his ideas into reality. Initially he had trouble with his librettists (William Bartholomew and Pastor Schubring) who either produced biblical text which was unsuitable or was difficult to set to music. As a result Mendelssohn wrote most of the libretto himself.

The first performance of *Elijah*, conducted by Mendelssohn, took place in Birmingham on August 26 1846 and was a complete and total triumph. Indeed the audience were so enthusiastic that four choruses and four arias were encored and the music critic of the Times wrote "Never was there a more complete triumph - never a more thorough and speedy recognition of a great work of art". It is however interesting to record that one of the loveliest arias from *Elijah*, *O rest in the Lord*, was nearly deleted by Mendelssohn because a friend drew his attention to its similarity to the Scots air *Auld Robin Gray*. *Elijah* was revised for its premiere in the Exeter Hall, London in April 1847 where it was also rapturously received. Unfortunately six months later, at the early age of 38, Mendelssohn died.

## Elijah: The Plot

The libretto to *Elijah* follows the biblical story with reasonable accuracy. The Israelites, living under the jurisdiction of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel had, as they often did, neglected the practices of Judaism and had adopted the beliefs and customs of other peoples of the region. Elijah, one of the most fiery and fervent of the Old Testament Prophets, laid the blame for the prolonged drought affecting the region on God's anger with the Israelites' adoption of heathen practices and Elijah urged them to return to the true faith of their fathers. In the hope of silencing Elijah, King Ahab agreed that the strength of Elijah's claim would be tested through a contest with the priests of Baal. A bullock was therefore slain and placed on a pyre and both the priests of Baal and Elijah were called upon to invoke their God to ignite it. The priests of Baal failed whereas Elijah, calling on the God of Israel, was successful. The Israelites, having had the power of their God demonstrated, repented. The drought ended and the priests of Baal were slain.

Elijah continued to denounce Ahab and Jezebel, their worship of Baal and their immoral court life. Jezebel, tiring of Elijah's continual preaching, successfully stirred up the Israelites to revolt against Elijah and in despair he left for the wilderness where he ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire. After this miracle, the Israelites once more returned to their faith.

*Diane Knill*

**Ingrid Attrot.** Hailed in *The Independent* as "a singer with uncommon theatrical sensibility and musical intelligence" Canadian-born soprano Ingrid Attrot divides her time between opera and concert work.

She has appeared as a soloist with the major British orchestras and abroad with the Montreal Symphony, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the Aarhus and Gulbenkian Orchestras. Her work with conductor Richard Hickox has included performances of Britten's *War Requiem* and *Peter Grimes* (Ellen Orford) and Beethoven's *Fidelio* (Leonora), recordings for Chandos of Respighi's song cycle *Deita Silvano* and Stanford's *Stabat Mater* (both with the BBC Philharmonic), Vaughan Williams' *Riders to the Sea*, and Holst's *The Wandering Scholar* (with the Northern Sinfonia).

Ingrid has a particular affinity for contemporary repertoire which was first recognised in winning the Eckhardt-Gramatte Competition, a major Canadian contemporary music award, and also being chosen as the major soloist for the Park Lane Group Series in London. She has performed with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and has sung Webern songs with the Orchestre National de Lyon. She gave her first performance of Georgy Kurtag's *Messages of the Late RV Trousova* with the French contemporary music ensemble GRAME in 1998 and has recently given further performances in Geneva with Contrechamps conducted by Heinz Holliger. She returns to Switzerland later this year for a performance of Messiaen's *Harawi* with Contrechamps.

In the coming season, she will be returning to her native Canada for performances of Abigail in Verdi's *Nabucco*, a role for which she has received critical acclaim.

**Deborah Miles-Johnson** was born in London and studied at the Royal College of Music. She now fulfills a busy and varied career performing regularly in all the major London concert venues and throughout the UK and abroad.

Engagements in recent seasons include Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles* which she has performed with both Sir Simon Rattle and Andrew Davis, *The Dream of Gerontius* with the New Queen's Hall Orchestra under Matthew Best, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Toronto, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* at the Barbican and most recently a tour of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the English Concert visiting Spain, Istanbul, Salzburg and Japan. She also performed and recorded *St Matthew Passion* with the Taverner Consort and the Norsk Barokorkester in the prestigious Ansbach Bachwoche, under Andrew Parrott.

A regular performer of the contemporary repertoire, Deborah stood in at three days' notice to premiere a new work, *Laments* by Brian Elias, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Tadaaki Otaka, which was well received at the Cheltenham Festival.

Among her commercial recordings are Peter Maxwell Davies' *Resurrection* with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Arvo Pärt's *Stabat Mater* and Carl Rütli's *Magnificat* for ASV. She made her Wigmore Hall debut performing *Upon Silence* by George Benjamin with the composer as conductor together with the viol group Fretwork following performances at the Festival Archipel in Geneva.

**Vernon Kirk** studied music at King's College, London, and singing with Kenneth Bowen at the Royal Academy of Music.

As a concert singer he has sung with many leading conductors and ensembles, and has worked extensively with Sir John Eliot Gardiner on his Bach Pilgrimage 2000, as well as other projects. BBC Proms appearances have included Carl Rütli's *Alpha et Omega* in which he sang as the tenor soloist at the 1999 BBC Proms Premiere with the BBC Symphony Chorus under Stephen Jackson, and Berlioz' *L'Enfance du Christ* with the BBC Symphony Chorus under David Atherton. He has performed Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *Creation* under Sir David Willcocks in Birmingham Town Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. His broadcasts for BBC Radio include *Alpha et Omega* by Rütli, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* and the cantata *The Company of Heaven*. He is an experienced performer in the role of the Evangelist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *St John Passion*, and last year was invited to tour South Africa to perform Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* in Pretoria and Cape Town.

Engagements for the years 2000-2001 include performances of Bach's oratorios in Darmstadt and Berlin, and Handel's *Messiah* in Italy and China.

**Jonathan Lemalu.** A New Zealand born Samoan, Jonathan Lemalu completed a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Otago in 1999, and Postgraduate Certificate studies at the Royal College of Music this year. He is currently on a Postgraduate Diploma Course in Advanced Performance at the RCM on the London Royal Schools Opera Course, studying with Madame Vera Rosza as a 2000 Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Scholar. In 1998 Jonathan made his professional debut as Colline in Puccini's *La Boheme* with New Zealand's National Opera Company.

In competitions Jonathan has won all New Zealand's major prizes and was named Concert FM's 1999 Broadcasting Artist of the Year. In the UK Jonathan has won several prizes at the RCM, the NFMS Alfreda Hodgson Bursary, Clonter Opera Prize, the overall Royal Overseas League Competition and Gold Medal, Richard Tauber Singer's Prize and most recently the inaugural Llangollen International Singer 2000 Competition with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

The 1999/2000 season has seen performances at St John's Smith Square, King's College Chapel, Cambridge, the Royal Albert Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Wigmore Hall. Highlights include Haydn's *Nelson Mass* for Sir David Willcocks' 80th birthday (RCM Symphony), Handel's *Messiah* with BT Scottish Ensemble, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with Hanover Band, Christus in Bach's *St John Passion* with Peter Schreier and the RCM Chamber Orchestra, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the Bocholt Chamber Orchestra, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the English Chamber Orchestra, and concerts and recitals in Rome, Germany, Scotland, Amsterdam, Wales, America, Australia and New Zealand. The 2000/2001 season began with a performance of Mozart Arias with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra at the 2000 Olympics Arts Festival at the Sydney Opera House.

**Janet Lincé.** Since conducting her first concert at St John's Smith Square in 1990, Janet Lincé has gained widespread recognition for her conducting with many different choirs and orchestras. She regularly directs four choirs and has performed in churches, cathedrals and concert halls throughout the South East and the Midlands, as well as abroad. Recent concerts have included performances of Bach's *Magnificat in Eb*, Monteverdi's *Vespers*, Duruflé's *Requiem* and Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, which she performed both in Oxford and in Germany.

Janet has a particular interest in working with amateur singers and choirs, and enjoys the challenge of enabling them to achieve their potential in performance. She has trained many of the major British choruses, including the BBC Symphony Chorus, the Philharmonia Chorus and the London Symphony Chorus and has worked with conductors such as Andrew Davis, Richard Hickox, Yakov Kreizberg, Kurt Masur and Mikhail Pletnev. Janet is greatly in demand as a choir trainer and workshop facilitator, both in the UK and abroad. She will shortly be undertaking her third visit to New Zealand to work with choirs and choral conductors.

Janet has a special interest in the music of Gustav Holst, and in the period instrument performance of the work of JS Bach and his contemporaries. However, her repertoire also includes large romantic works, including Brahms' *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*. She also enjoys introducing less familiar works and composers to audiences and is noted for her innovative programming, where new and unusual works are combined with more standard repertoire. Recent concerts have included works such as Holst's *Choral Fantasia*, Janacek's *Otcenáš* and Bixi's *Missa Integra in D*, and a commissioned work, *On Angel's Wing* by Cecilia McDowall. Future plans include Vierne's *Messe Solennelle*, Gorecki's *Totus Tuus* and a concert at Douai Abbey featuring Tallis's 40-part motet *Spem in alium* along with works by Jonathan Harvey, Jonathan Dove and John Tavener.

Janet has led workshops for the Newbury Choral Society for several years, and was appointed Principal Conductor in February 2000.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

June 23, 2001 7.45 pm	Anton Bruckner John Taverner Arvo Pärt Gorecki At Douai Abbey, Woolhampton	<i>Three Motets</i> <i>Today the Virgin</i> <i>Song for Athene</i> <i>The Beatitudes</i> <i>Cantate Domino</i> <i>Totus Tuus</i>
Dec 8, 2001 7.45 pm	Christmas Concert At St Nicolas Church, Newbury	
Feb 2, 2002 7.45 pm	Bizet Mozart Puccini At Newbury Corn Exchange	<i>Te Deum</i> <i>Regina Cœli</i> <i>Messa di Gloria</i>

## CONCERTS BY OTHER LOCAL SOCIETIES

March 31, 2001	NEWBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, at St Nicolas' Church, Newbury	
	Smetana	from <i>Má Vlast</i> <i>Vyšehrad, Vltava, Blanþk</i>
	Brahms	<i>Symphony No.2 in D major</i>
April 28, 2001	NEWBURY BAROQUE SINGERS, at St Martin's Church, E.Woodhay	
	Bach	<i>Ascension Oratorio</i> <i>Magnificat in D</i> <i>Concerto for Oboe &amp; Violin</i>
Oct 20, 2001	CECILIA CONSORT, at Douai Abbey, Woolhampton (To be arranged)	

The Newbury Choral Society is very grateful for the financial assistance which has been provided by:

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## DO YOU ENJOY SINGING? THEN WHY NOT JOIN US?

**M**embership of Newbury Choral Society is open to all who enjoy choral singing, can read music, and can promise a regular commitment. The Society meets regularly on Monday evenings at 7.30 pm at the Newbury Methodist Church Hall. If you are interested in joining the Choral Society and would like more information, telephone the **Secretary, Jeremy Wright, on 01635 37657**. Rehearsals for the next concert begin on Monday 26th March, 2001 at 7.30 pm.

Newbury Choral Society has provided the finest choral music for Newbury citizens for over 110 years. If you or your company would like to support this thriving Society and contribute to its splendid musical programme please contact **Jeremy Wright on 01635 37657**