

MENDELSSOHN: ELIJAH



**THREE CHOIRS
FESTIVAL 2025**
HEREFORD 26 JUL – 2 AUG

Felix Mendelssohn
Elijah 130'

**The interval will be held
after Part I**

Katherine Broderick *soprano*
Jess Dandy *contralto*
Anthony Gregory *tenor*
Matthew Brook *bass-baritone*
Three Choirs Festival Chorus
Philharmonia Orchestra
Geraint Bowen *conductor*

Supported by the Perry Family Charitable Trust

Katherine Broderick and Jess Dandy supported by Professor Jeremy and Alison Dibble in memory of Mollie Manning and Pamela Dibble

Anthony Gregory supported by Clare Wichbold

Elijah **PART I**

Introduction

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.

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?
The deeps afford no water! And the rivers are
exhausted! The suckling's tongue now cleaveth for
thirst to his mouth! The infant children ask for bread!
And there is no one breaketh it to feed them!

2. Duet with Chorus

The People

Lord, bow Thine ear to our prayer!

Two Women

Zion spreadeth her hands for aid, and there is neither
help nor comfort.

3. Recitative

Obadiah

Ye people, rend your hearts and not your garments for
your transgressions: 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.

4. Aria

Obadiah

'If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me, ye shall ever
surely find Me.' Thus saith our God. Oh! that I knew
where I might find Him, that I might even come before
His presence!

5. Chorus

The People

Yet doth the Lord see it not, He mocketh at us; His
curse hath fallen down upon us, His wrath will pursue
us till He destroy us.
For He, the Lord our God, He is a jealous God, and He
visiteth all the fathers' sins on the children to the third
and the fourth generation of them that hate Him.
His mercies on thousands fall, on all them that love him
and keep his commandments.

6. Recitative

An Angel

Elijah! Get thee hence, Elijah! Depart and turn thee

eastward: thither hide thee by Cherith's brook. There shalt thou drink its waters; and the Lord thy God hath commanded the ravens to feed thee there: so do according unto His word.

7. Chorus & Recitative

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.

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 cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth

8. Recitative, Aria & 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

Shall the dead arise, the dead arise and praise thee?

Elijah

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

The Widow

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

reviveth! My son reviveth!

Elijah

Now behold, thy son liveth!

The Widow

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

Elijah

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

The Widow

... with all my soul, and with all my might. O blessed are they who fear Him!

9. Chorus

The People

Blessed are the men who fear Him, they ever walk in the way of peace. Through darkness riseth light, light to the upright.

He is gracious, compassionate; He is righteous.

10. Recitative & Chorus

Elijah

As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth, before whom I stand, three years this day fulfilled, I will shew myself unto Ahab; and the Lord will then send rain again upon the earth.

Ahab

Art thou Elijah? Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

The People

Thou art Elijah, thou he that troubleth Israel?

Elijah

I never troubled Israel's peace: it is thou, Ahab, and all thy father's house.

Ye have forsaken God's commands, and thou hast follow'd Baalim. Now send, and gather to me the whole of Israel unto Mount Carmel; there summon the prophets of Baal, and also the prophets of the groves who are feasted at Jezebel's table. Then we shall see whose God is the Lord.

The People

And then we shall see whose God is the Lord.

Elijah

Rise then, ye priests of Baal; select and slay a bullock, and put no fire under it; uplift your voices and call the god ye worship; and the god who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

The People

Yea, and the God who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

Elijah

Call first upon your god, your numbers are many. I, even I only, remain one prophet of the Lord. Invoke your forest gods, and mountain deities.

11. Chorus

Prophets of Baal

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

12. Recitative & Chorus

Elijah

Call him louder, for he is a god! He talketh, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or, peradventure, he sleepeth: so awaken him! Call him louder, call him louder!

Prophets of Baal

Hear our cry, o Baal, now arise! Wherefore slumber?

13. Recitative & Chorus

Elijah

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

Prophets of Baal

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

14. Recitative & Aria

Elijah

Draw near, all ye people, come to me!

Elijah

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, this day let it be known that Thou art God, and that I am Thy servant! Lord God of Abraham! Oh shew to all this people that I have done these things according to Thy word. Oh hear me, Lord, and answer me! Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, oh hear me and answer

me, and shew this people that Thou art Lord God. And let their hearts again be turned!

15. Chorale

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!

16. Recitative & Chorus

Elijah

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

The People

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

Elijah

Take all the prophets of Baal, and let not one of them escape you. Bring them down to Kishon's brook, and there let them be slain.

The People

Take all the prophets of Baal and let not one of them escape us: bring all and slay them!

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.

18. Arioso

Alto

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, even from Him have they fled.

19. Recitative & Chorus

Obadiah

O man of God, help thy people! Among the idols of the Gentiles, are there any that can command the rain, or cause the heavens to give their showers? The Lord our God alone can do these things.

Elijah

O Lord, Thou hast overthrown Thine enemies and destroyed them. Look down on us from heaven, O Lord; regard the distress of Thy people. Open the heavens and send us relief. Help, help Thy servant now, O God!

The People

Open the heavens and send us relief. Help, help Thy servant now, O God!

Elijah

Go up now, child, and look toward the sea. Hath my prayer been heard by the Lord?

The Child

There is nothing. The heavens are as brass, they are as brass above me.

Elijah

When the heavens are closed up because they have sinned against Thee: yet if they pray and confess Thy name, and turn away from their sins when Thou dost afflict them: then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin. Help, send Thy servant help, O God!

The People

Then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin. Help, send Thy servant help, O God!

Elijah

Go up again, and still look towards the sea.

The Child

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

Elijah

Hearst thou no sound of rain? Seest thou nothing arise from the deep?

The Child

No: there is nothing.

Elijah

Have respect to the prayer of Thy servant, O Lord, my God! Unto Thee will I cry, Lord, my rock, be not silent to me! And Thy great mercies remember, Lord.

The Child

Behold, a little cloud ariseth now from the waters; it is like a man's hand! The heavens are black with cloud 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!

20. Chorus

The People

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



Interval

PART II

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 I, thy God, will strengthen thee.'

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.

23. Recitative & Chorus

Elijah

The Lord hath exalted thee from among the people: and over 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 walk in the sins of Jeroboam. Thou hast made a grove and an altar to Baal, and served him and worshipped him. Thou hast killed the righteous, and also taken possession. And the Lord shall smite all Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He shall give Israel up, and thou shalt know He is the Lord.

Queen Jezebel

Have ye not heard he hath prophesied against all Israel?

Chorus

We heard it with our ears.

Queen Jezebel

Hath he not prophesied also against the King of Israel?

Chorus

We heard it with our ears.

Queen Jezebel

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

Chorus

He shall perish!

Queen Jezebel

Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets?

Chorus

He shall perish!

Queen Jezebel

Yea, by the sword he destroyed them all!

Chorus

He destroyed them all!

Queen Jezebel

He also closed the heavens!

Chorus

He also closed the heavens!

Queen Jezebel

And called down a famine upon the land.

Chorus

And called down a famine upon the land.

Queen Jezebel

So go ye forth and seize Elijah, for he is worthy to die; slaughter him! do unto him as he hath done!

24. Chorus

The People

Woe to him, he shall perish; for 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!

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 say 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.

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! It is enough! O Lord, now take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers! Now let me die, Lord, take away my life!

27. Recitative

Tenor

See, now he sleepeth beneath a juniper tree in the wilderness, but the angels of the Lord encamp round about all them that fear Him.

28. Chorus

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.

29. Chorus

Angels

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

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.

Elijah

O Lord, I have laboured in vain; yea, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain! 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!

31. Aria

An Angel

Oh rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desires. Commit thy way unto Him, and trust in Him, and fret not thyself because of evil-doers.

32. Chorus

Angels

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

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.

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.

35. Recitative & Chorus

Soprano, Alto & Chorus

Above Him stood the Seraphim, and one cried to another:

Holy, holy, holy is God the Lord, the Lord Sabaoth! Now His glory hath filled all the earth.

36. Chorus & Recitative

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.

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.

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.

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 judgments of the future, and in Horeb its vengeance. And when the Lord would take him away to heaven, lo! There came a fiery chariot with fiery horses, and he went by a whirlwind to heaven.

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 for ever.

40. Recitative

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.

41. Chorus

But the Lord, from the north hath 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.

42. Quartet & Chorus

Quartet

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

Chorus

And then shall your light break forth as the light of morning breaketh: and your health shall speedily spring forth then: and the glory of the Lord ever shall reward you. Lord, our Creator, how excellent Thy Name is in all the nations! Thou fillest heaven with Thy glory. Amen.



