

# **NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY**

## **Come and Sing**

**Mendelssohn's**

# ***ELIJAH***

Sarah Helsby Hughes – soprano

Susan Marrs – mezzo-soprano

Joseph Buckmaster – tenor

Jacob Feldman – baritone

Graham Eccles – Organ

Simon Russell – Conductor

**St Mary's Church, Nantwich**

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 6.00 pm**

## Welcome

Welcome to Nantwich, to St Mary's Church, and to the annual "Come and Sing" event hosted by the Nantwich Choral Society. This year we are performing Mendelssohn's Elijah. Having had a glance on the internet for other "Come and Sing" performances of Elijah, I am reasonably confident that this is the only such event taking place in the first few months of 2020 outside London and the South East. I stand corrected if someone can prove otherwise.

At these events we actually look forward to the size of the choir being larger than the size of the audience and this is reflected in the layout of the church, with the choir occupying the nave seats whilst the audience occupies the choir stalls under the tower. Please bear with us as we try to accommodate everyone.

As is always the case for "Come and Sings", we attract visitors from across the North of England and the Midlands. In determining the timings for the day, we try to respect the fact that people have large distances to travel and thus have the concert starting at the early time of 6:00pm. The finish should therefore be around 8:30pm to 9:00pm.

In addition to those travelling long distances, we have people attending en-masse from other choral societies within the local area. Again, welcome to all.

As our usual music director, John Naylor, is currently recovering from surgery, today's rehearsals and concert are under the direction of our regular accompanist, Simon Russell. The organ will be played by Graham Eccles. In addition, it is always a pleasure to welcome excellent soloists to perform with us. On this occasion we have Sarah Helsby Hughes, soprano, Susan Marrs, mezzo-soprano, Joseph Buckmaster, tenor, and Jacob Feldman, baritone.

Part of the enjoyment of a day such as today is the opportunity to sing in a large choir. However, this is an expensive undertaking and the Nantwich Choral Society is, as always, grateful to our supporters, sponsors and advertisers who regularly provide grants and sponsorship to support our aim of bringing high quality classical choral music to South Cheshire, and promoting such music in the area. In particular I would thank Cheshire East Council, Nantwich Town Council and the Harding Trust for their continued support.

I trust an enjoyable day is being had by all, whether you are here as an audience member for the concert, whether you are accompanying a choir member and have had the opportunity to spend the day looking around our attractive market town of Nantwich, or whether you, as a choir member, have been inside for the rehearsals and have seen little of the town, other than, maybe, for the odd cafe or restaurant.

Whatever your own personal wish or aim for the day, I hope it has been fulfilled and that the final concert has been an enjoyable experience. Assuming you have enjoyed the day and you think you may be interested in taking part again next year, please leave your details with anyone from the Registration team or any member of the Front of House team.

And finally, if you think you would like to sing on a regular basis with the Nantwich Choral Society, then contact any member of the choir, who will direct you to the relevant officer.

Adrian Percy  
Chairman

## **Mendelssohn's Elijah – The Story**

### **Background**

Israel, c 865 BC: Ahab is king. Some 60 years before he came to the throne the country was divided when the ten northern tribes, led by Jereboam, rebelled against Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Judah was left with the two remaining tribes and the capital city of Jerusalem, the key religious and strategic centre.

Without Jerusalem, Jereboam had to find other centres of worship, and so he set up golden calves to serve initially as symbols of the presence of Jehovah. This was a rather ambivalent gesture since the bull was also an object of Canaanite worship (a nature god, a Baal) and so began the invasion of foreign gods. Jezebel, Ahab's wife who was a daughter of the King of Tyre in Phoenicia, accelerated the process when she arrived in the kingdom. The Phoenicians worshipped the nature god Melkar, known to the Israelites like all foreign gods as Baal. When Jezebel married Ahab she brought the idols, priests and prophets of her own religion with her.

### **Prologue (No1)**

Worship of Jehovah – God the Lord of Israel – has dwindled. Elijah the prophet is very much a lone voice. He puts a curse on the whole country: there will be no precious rain until he gives the word.

#### **The drought has become severe, but the people refuse to turn to God. (Nos 2-5)**

As the overture ends the people cry for help. At first wearily and then more angrily they complain about the lack of water. Obadiah, Elijah's servant, tells them that the remedy is

in their own hands: because of their transgressions Elijah has sealed the heavens through God's power. If they forsake their idols and return to God, if they truly seek him with all their hearts, God will relent.

Oh no, say the people. God mocks us, he has cursed us and will destroy us. He is a hard, jealous God and he will keep blaming a fourth generation for their great grandparents' sins even though usually his mercies fall on those who love him and keep his commandments.

### **Elijah goes into hiding, and stays with a widow whose son he restores to life. (Nos 6-9)**

In the meantime, Elijah is instructed to go into hiding in the east of the country at the brook of Cherith where ravens will find food for him. But even the water in the brook runs out, so he is further instructed to go to Zatepah where a widow will look after him. God will arrange that the supply of food will last until he sends rain again for a new crop.

The widow has a critically ill son and is really alarmed when Elijah arrives. Somewhat perversely, she blames Elijah for her son's illness because she thinks that the presence of a Man of God automatically brings hidden sins to light. God can no longer ignore them and will seek retribution. Her son becomes so ill he stops breathing. Elijah prays to God that the child may live. The widow's scepticism turns to belief when her son revives. Elijah urges her to fear God with all her heart, her soul and her might. The chorus comment that 'Blessed are those who fear God – they ever walk in the ways of peace. Through darkness light comes to the upright.'

### **The public contest to find 'Top God'. (Nos 10-17)**

On the third anniversary of his original curse Elijah resolves to visit King Ahab and arrange for God to send rain again. Ahab regards Elijah as a real troublemaker, but Elijah boldly tells him to his face that it is Ahab himself and his ancestors who have caused all the trouble by worshipping Baal. He manages to persuade Ahab to gather the whole population at Mount Carmel and to summon the prophets of the gods whom the queen supports. He proposes a contest to determine which god is top god – 'whose God is Lord'. He instructs that a bullock should be killed as a sacrifice (a burnt offering), but the fire under it is not to be lit. They must call upon their gods, he will call upon Jehovah, and whichever god causes the fire to be ignited shall be God the Lord.

Elijah invites the others to have first turn – there are a lot of them, but he is the only prophet of God left. The priests cry more and more urgently to Baal for a response. Elijah mocks them – perhaps he's in a meeting, out hunting or travelling somewhere? Perhaps he's asleep – why not cry louder and wake him up? Even though they try to wake him up, Elijah tells them that they are wasting their time. Their increasingly desperate cries are met by complete silence.

Elijah invites the people to gather round him and then calmly calls upon God – the god of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, the ancestors of the people – to prove himself and to show that Elijah is acting under his instructions. He asks that God will answer him, that he will show the people that he is Lord God and that the people's hearts may again be turned back to him. At this critical moment Mendelssohn inserts a Lutheran chorale as a sort of sung creed, a statement of universal belief in God.

Elijah invokes God's angels, his ministers of flaming fire, to descend. To the people's amazement fire descends from heaven and consumes the sacrifice. They fall in worship on their faces, acknowledge that Jehovah is God and declare that they will have none other.

Flushed with success, Elijah immediately calls for all the prophets of Baal to be seized and executed. 'Isn't Gods word like a hammer that breaks even rocks into pieces?' he declaims. The alto soloist reflects; 'Woe unto those who forsake God, destruction shall fall on them for they have transgressed against him. Even though God has redeemed them, they have fled from him: Woe unto them.'

### **The people pray for God's forgiveness: He sends rain in response. (Nos 18-20)**

Obadiah, ever pragmatic, asks Elijah to help the people because the need for rain is desperate. The heathen gods failed miserably to bring rain: only God can solve the problem. So Elijah prays to God for rain and the people repeat his prayer. Elijah sends a child to see if rain clouds are gathering over the sea but there is nothing. Elijah says the lack of rain is God's answer to the people for rejecting him. The people ask for forgiveness and pray to God. At the third attempt Elijah makes an impassioned plea to God, the child announces a rapidly gathering rainstorm and the people joyfully give thanks to God because rain falls at last on the thirsty land.

## **SECOND PART**

### **Introduction (Nos 21 and 22)**

The second part of the oratorio opens with a soprano aria in which the people of Israel are reminded to pay attention to God for he will comfort and strengthen them. The chorus pick up the theme of 'Be not afraid, thy help is near, says God the Lord.'

### **Elijah accuses King Ahab of provoking God. Queen Jezebel turns the tables on Elijah who, dispirited, is forced into hiding in the wilderness. (Nos 23-29)**

Now full of confidence, Elijah accuses King Ahab of provoking God in the first place by worshipping Baal and killing the righteous; as a result of his actions, God will wreak revenge on the people of Israel. The Queen stirs up the people – 'Haven't you heard what Elijah has prophesied against Israel?' 'Yes, we've heard it', say the people. 'Well, who governs the country, King Ahab or Elijah' asks the queen, calling for Elijah's blood and

blaming him for the famine. 'Yes', say the people, 'it was Elijah who put the curse on the land in the first place. Why has he spoken in the name of the Lord? He shall die!'

Obadiah warns Elijah to escape to the wilderness and begs for his blessing before he leaves. Once there, Elijah's confidence is shattered and he prays to God that his life may come to an end – 'It is enough.' Despite all his efforts, the people of Israel have forsaken God and killed his prophets. 'Now let me die, Lord take away my life.' He goes to sleep in the wilderness under a juniper tree.

But God's angels gather round him and instruct him to look up to the mountains because God is coming to help him. The chorus comments that God watches over Israel and never slumbers or sleeps.

**Elijah has difficulty keeping his spirits up, but he is told to go to Mt Sinai by an angel. God appears to him there and he is gathered up to heaven in a whirlwind. (Nos 30-39)**

An Angel wakes Elijah and tells him that he has a long journey to go to Horeb (aka Sinai), God's sacred mountain. Elijah asks God why he doesn't come down from heaven and amaze his adversaries – 'Why have you let them forsake you? Please let me die'. The Angel answers him: 'Rest in the Lord, be patient and he will grant your wish.' The chorus urge steadfastness: 'He who shall endure to the end will be saved'.

Night falls, and Elijah prays again to God. An angel appears and tells him to stand on the mountain because God in all his glory will appear. The weather becomes violent: there is a hurricane, a tsunami, an earthquake and a firestorm, but God wasn't in any of them. Then there was a still, small voice, and onward came the Lord. Above him the seraphim stand who cry to each other 'Holy, holy is God the Lord. His glory has filled all the earth.'

The chorus reassure Elijah: 'Go on your way, for now God has seven thousand followers.' 'Yes', says Elijah – 'I go on my way in the strength of the Lord. Even though the mountains depart and the hills are removed, God's kindness and peace will not depart from me.'

The chorus describe how Elijah looks as though he is on fire. He overthrows mighty kings and hears the judgements of the future at Mount Horeb, and when God is ready to receive him in heaven a fiery chariot and horses appear which envelop him in a whirlwind. The tenor comments: 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in their heavenly Father's realm.'

**Epilogue - commentary on Elijah's role in the transformation from the old to the new covenant. (Nos 40-42)**

The soprano remarks that God sent Elijah before the Great Day of the Lord so that he could turn the hearts of the people lest God come and smite the earth with a curse. The chorus then look forward to the next coming – one who from the rising of the sun shall

call on his name and who will trample on princes. 'Behold my servant and mine elect in whom my soul delights.' 'O come unto him', sing the combined soloists, 'and your soul will live forever.'

The chorus declare as the oratorio concludes: 'Then shall your light break forth as the light of morning..... and the glory of the Lord ever shall reward you. O Lord our Creator, how excellent your name is in all the heavens.'

John Naylor

## ELIJAH - AN ORATORIO

### FIRST PART

#### 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

#### No 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?

#### No 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.

#### No 4 AIR

*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'.

#### No 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 upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. His mercies on thousands fall - fall on all them that love Him and keep his commandments.

#### No 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.

## **No 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.

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

## **No 8 RECITATIVE AND AIR**

*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.

### **RECITATIVE**

*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 in thy mouth is the truth. What shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits to me?

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

## **No 9 CHORUS**

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.

## **No 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? 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 commands; and thou hast followed 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 God 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* 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.

### **No 11 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!

### **No 12 RECITATIVE**

*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!

### **CHORUS**

*Priests of Baal* Hear our cry, O Baal! Now arise! Wherefore slumber?

### **No 13 RECITATIVE**

*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.

### **CHORUS**

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

### **RECITATIVE**

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

### **No 14 AIR**

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 hearts again be turned!

### **No 15 CHORUS**

*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.

### **No 16 RECITATIVE**

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

## CHORUS

*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!

## RECITATIVE

*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.

## CHORUS

*The People* Take all the prophets of Baal; and let not one of them escape us: bring all, and slay them!

## No 17 AIR

*Elijah* Is not His word like a fire: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in 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.

## No 18 AIR (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.

## No 19 RECITATIVE AND CHORUS (Tenor)

*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 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* Hearest thou no sound 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!

## **No 20 CHORUS**

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!

## **SECOND PART**

### **No 21 AIR (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.

## **No 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.

## **No 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 be gone, 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.

## **No 26 AIR**

*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, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only am left; and they seek my life to take it away.

## **No 27 RECITATIVE**

See, now he sleepeth beneath a juniper tree in the wilderness: and there the angel of the Lord encampeth round about all them that fear Him.

## **No 29 CHORUS**

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

## **No 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!

## **No 31 AIR**

*Angel* O rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him; and He will give thee thy heart's desires. Commit thy way unto Him, and trust in Him, and fret not thyself because of evildoers.

## **No 32 CHORUS**

He that shall endure to the end shall be saved.

## **No 33 RECITATIVE**

*Elijah* Night falleth round me, O Lord! Be not Thou 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.

## **No 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.

## **No 36 RECITATIVE AND CHORUS**

*Chorus* Go, return upon thy way! For the Lord hath yet left Him seven thousand in Israel knees which have not bowed to Baal; go, return upon thy way; thus the Lord commandeth.

## **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.

### **No 37 AIR**

*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.

### **No 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.

### **No 39 AIR (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.

### **No 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.

### **No 41a QUARTET**

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

### **No 42 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!

## Biographies

### Sarah Helsby Hughes – soprano

After graduation from Birmingham Conservatoire her career has taken her all over the world, including performances in Europe, the USA and Japan. She has appeared for various opera companies, including Mid-Wales Opera, Carl Rosa Opera, Opera North, Lyric Opera Dublin, D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, Opera Ireland, Pavilion Opera, City of Birmingham Touring Opera, New Devon Opera, The International Gilbert and Sullivan Company, and Focus Opera.

Operatic roles include: Musetta/Mimi *La bohème* Miss Jessel *The Turn of the Screw*, The Countess *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Queen of the Night *The Magic Flute*, Adina *L'elisir D'Amore*, Tosca, Violetta *La traviata*, Josephine/Plaintiff *HMS Pinafore/Trial by Jury*, Donna Anna *Don Giovanni*, *Madame Butterfly*, Rosalinda *Die Fledermaus*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, *Carmen*, Gilda *Rigoletto*, Elsie Maynard *Yeomen Of the Guard*, Anna *The Merry Widow*, Mary Crawford *Mansfield Park*, Senta *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

Concert work includes all the major oratorio soprano solos, with appearances in Italy, The Netherlands, Ireland, and all over the UK. She regularly appears as a soprano soloist for Music Festivals at Sea on board P&O cruise ships, and for Theatrical Adventures River Cruises.

In 2015 Sarah directed *Die Fledermaus* and *La traviata* for Focus Opera at Chiswick House, and *Madame Butterfly* for Nottingham Festival Opera at the Arts Theatre, Nottingham.

Since 2011, she has been the Artistic Director of Heritage Opera, responsible for producing, translating, and directing most of the company's output. She has also directed *Turandot* (2012), *The Elixir of Love* (2013), *The Magic Flute* (2014), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (2014), *The Thieving Magpie* (2015), *Cavalleria Rusticana/I Pagliacci* (2016) and *Norma* (2017) in which she sang the title role, for Midland Opera. She created the role of Gloria in Alan Williams and Ian McMillan's *The Arsonists* in Salford, November 2017, which she directed at Salford University. This production was supported and live-streamed by the BBC.

Sarah directed the first professional production of Haddon Hall in the UK since its debut in 1892, for the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival, August 2018, and directed *The Yeomen of the Guard* for the 2019 Festival.

### Susan Marrs – mezzo-soprano

Susan graduated from Trinity College of Music, London, after winning The Ricordi Opera Prize and The Trinity College Singing Department Prize.

Susan works extensively as a concert soloist and her wide Oratorio repertoire includes performances of Elgar's major works, Verdi's *Requiem*, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*, Mozart's *C Minor Mass*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and *St. Matthew Passion*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and *Stabat Mater*, Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* and Karl Jenkins *The Armed Man*.

Susan enjoyed twelve years as a member of the Extra Chorus at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and performances included Wagner's *Parsifal*, Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*, Britten's *Peter Grimes* and Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. Susan has also sung for English National Opera in their production of *The Pearlfishers*.

Susan sings with "London Voices" under the direction of Terry Edwards and Ben Parry, and has participated in numerous concerts and recordings of works by Bach, Stravinsky, Ligeti, Boulez, Sir John Tavener, Sir Michael Tippett and Sir Paul McCartney. London Voices work has taken Susan to sing in Paris, Lucerne, Berlin and New York City. Film score recordings have included *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, *The Hunger Games* and *Fantastic beasts and where to find them*.

Susan owns and teaches at Singing Centre Nantwich, occasionally runs vocal masterclasses and is also a peripatetic voice teacher at The King's School, Chester. Susan is a member of the Nantwich Singers and also conducts two choirs – Nantwich Ladies Choir and The Dee Ensemble, based in Chester.

Susan is a Fellow of Trinity College, London.

## **Joseph Buckmaster – tenor**

Joseph Buckmaster is a Lyric Spinto Tenor who has just completed his MA at the Royal Academy of Music under the tutelage of Richard Berkeley-Steele and his vocal coach Iain Ledingham.

Joseph began his training at the RNCM where he developed a deep passion for the Operatic repertoire. He performed in the chorus for several of their operas, including Offenbach's *La Belle Helene*, Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Barber's *Vanessa*. In 2012 he covered the role of Giove in the RNCM's production of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*.

Since graduating from the RNCM he has performed professionally the roles of Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* and covered the roles of and Don Jose in Bizet's *Carmen* for Heritage Opera. For Flat Pack Music he has performed the roles of Tamino in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*, Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Bohème*, and Don Curzio and Basilio in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. He performed the roles of Apollo in Handel's *Semele* and Alméric in Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* for Royal Academy Opera. He also performed Opera Holland Park

chorus for their 2019 season. Joseph performed the role of Rodolfo for Hampstead Garden Operas 2019 production of *La Bohème*.

In 2017 Joseph Co-Founded Flat Pack Music (FPM) an Opera company based in the North West of England. FPM focusses on bringing opera to a wider audience.

Joseph has performed as soloist throughout the country including Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabaeus*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Stainer's *Crucifixion*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

## **Jacob Feldman – baritone**

"His voice was enchanting," award winning Canadian-German baritone Jacob Feldman, was hailed for his performance by the National Operatic and Dramatic Association as Schaunard in Puccini's *La Bohème*. Jacob is currently in his second year of the MA in Performance course at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studies with Raymond Connell and Marek Ruszczynski. A graduate of the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, Jacob was a member of the Opera Undergraduate Program and was the winner of the Luciano Pavarotti Award as well as the President's Scholar of Excellence Award. Jacob's operatic roles include: Schaunard in Puccini's *La Bohème*, Truffaldin in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Moralès in Bizet's *Carmen* and Mars in Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers*.

Equally comfortable on the concert platform, Jacob has performed the title role of Elijah from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Christus in J. S. Bach's *Johannes-Passion*, Pilatus, Judas and Christus (cover) in Bach's *Matthäus-Passion*, and has been the Bass Soloist for Mozart's *Requiem* as well as for Handel's *Messiah*.

Jacob is an alumnus of the Highlands Opera Studio (2019), Music Academy of the West (2018) and the Aspen Opera Center at the Aspen Music Festival and School (2017).

## **Graham Eccles**

Graham Eccles first studied the organ at Worksop College in Nottinghamshire; during this time he gained his LTCL and ARCO diplomas.

He subsequently studied at the Royal Northern College of music in Manchester under Ronald Frost and was appointed Boddington Organ Scholar at St. Ann's Church. As well as graduating from the college with an upper division diploma he gained the diploma in professional performance and the Alice Shawcross prize in Church music. He also achieved the ARCM and FRCO diplomas at this time.



In 1989 Graham started as Assistant Organist at Chester Cathedral and played a key role in the musical life of the city both in and out of the Cathedral, playing for regular services, broadcasts and recordings.

He was Organist and Master of the Choristers at St Asaph Cathedral in North Wales between 1998 and 2003. Whilst there, he was awarded the diploma in Choral Directing from the Royal College of Organists, gaining the Brook Memorial Prize.

From 2004, Graham became a freelance musician and as well as teaching and performing locally, he is one of the regular organists for the Daily Service on BBC Radio 4. He is a visiting tutor in organ at the Bangor University, and is Conductor of Colwyn Bay Choral Society as well as St Asaph Choral Society and is in regular demand as an organ accompanist by many other choirs and Choral Societies of the North West and has been Organist at Birkenhead School for a number of years and is accompanist of Chester Music Society Choir. He has played many times with the RLPO and Hallé orchestras. He was Director of Music at Bangor Cathedral between 2009 and 2014 and deputised as the third organist at Chester Cathedral during the last academic year.

He has played many organ recitals in the UK, Europe and beyond.

## **Simon Russell - conductor**

Simon studied organ at Birkenhead School with Timothy Lawford and then at Cambridge as Organ Scholar at St. Catharines's College, where he continued studies with Gillian Weir and the late Peter Le Huray. After Cambridge he was appointed Assistant Organist at Chester Cathedral but decided after a while to keep music as a hobby and gain fortune from computer keyboards.

He was firstly accompanist and then Music Director of the Hoylake Choral Society from 1982 until he moved, in 2000, to Nantwich where he is Organist at St Mary's Parish Church. He is an annual recitalist at Chester Cathedral and is on the 'reserve' organist list covering holiday periods and other absences. He is also in demand as an organ tutor and has many Associated Board and other pupil distinctions and diploma successes to his credit.

Simon is currently the Northern Region Coordinator for the RSCM and enjoys a flourishing freelance programme as an organ recitalist in great demand.

Simon was appointed accompanist to Nantwich Choral Society in 2010.



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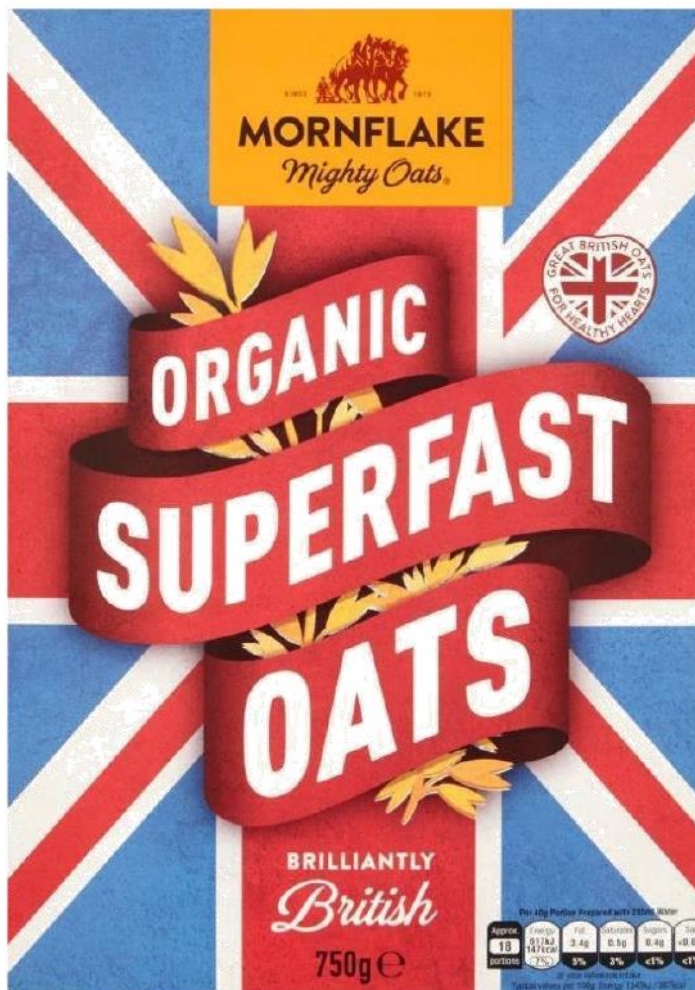
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# Programme of events 2019/2020

Saturday 21 March 2020, 7.30 pm  
St Mary's Church Nantwich  
**Bach – *Mass in B minor***

Saturday 23 May 2020, 7.30 pm  
St Mary's Church Nantwich  
**Rossini – *Petite Messe Solenelle***

Saturday 6 June 2020, 7.30 pm  
Exchange Visit to Lüdenscheid  
**Rossini – *Petite Messe Solonelle***

## Acknowledgements

Nantwich Choral Society gratefully acknowledges the support during the recent past from The Arts Council, The Harding Trust, Cheshire East Council, Nantwich Town Council, the advertisers in our programmes and other sponsors and donors.

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