

"Elijah"

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

The Ocean Grove Auditorium Choir

The Festive Arts Orchestra

Judith Pannill, *Soprano*
Melora Love, *Mezzo-Soprano*

Ronald Naldi, *Tenor*
Kevin Short, *Bass- Baritone*

Bonnie Ayres, *Soprano*
Linda Baker-Grimm, *Alto*

Jeffrey Allen, *Tenor*
Willi H. Muenchrath, *Bass*

Dr. Gordon Turk, Organist

Lewis A. Daniels, Conductor

Sunday, August 29, 1993

Seven-thirty o'clock

Invocation

Dr. Harold Schmul,
Vice-President, OGCMA

Elijah
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
PART I

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

Chorus: 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 deep affords 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! Lord, bow thine ear to our prayer! Zion spreadeth her hands for aid; and there is neither help nor comfort.

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. "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!

Chorus: 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, fall on all them that love Him and keep His commandments.

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.

Quartet: 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.

Angel: Now Cherith's brook is dried up, Elijah; Arise and depart, and get thee to Zerepath; 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.

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. O turn in mercy, help this widow's son! For Thou art gracious and full of compassion. And plenteous in mercy and truth. Lord my God, let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!

Widow: Wilt thou shew wonders, wonders to the dead? There is no breath no breath in him.

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

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

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

Widow: The Lord hath heard thy prayer; the soul of my son reviveth!

Elijah: Now behold, thy son liveth!

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, love Him with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. O, blessed are they who fear Him.

Chorus: Blessed are the men who fear Him, they ever walk in the ways of peace. Through darkness riseth light, light to the upright. He is gracious, compassionate. He is righteous.

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? Art 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 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 the Lord. 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 then I will call on the Lord Jehovah: And the God who by fire shall answer, Let Him be God. 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.

Chorus: Baal, we cry to thee: hear and answer us! Heed the

sacrifice we offer! Hear us Baal, hear mighty god!
Baal, O answer us! Baal, let thy flames fall and extirpate
the foe!

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: Hear our cry, O Baal! Now arise, wherefore slumber?

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: Baal! Hear and answer Baal! Mark how the scorner
derideth us. Hear and answer!

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 peopl
that I have done these things according to thy word. O hear
me, Lord and answer me! O show this people that Thou art
Lord God; and let their hearts again be turned!

Chorale: 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!

Elijah: O Thou, who makest thine angels spirits: Thou, whose
ministers are flaming fires: Let them now descend!

Chorus: 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.

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. Is not His word like a fire? And like a hammer that
breaketh the rock into pieces. For God is angry with the
wicked ev'ry day; and if the wicked turn not, the Lord
will whet his sword; and He hath bent his bow and made
it ready!

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. Destruction shall fall upon them.
Though they are by Him redeemed; from Him have
they fled. Woe unto them!

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

Youth: There is nothing. The heav'ns 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! Go up again and still
look toward the sea..

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?

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!

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!

Chorus: Thanks be to God for all His mercies!

Elijah: Thanks be to God for He is gracious; and His mercy
endureth forevermore.

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.

- Greeting and Offering -

PART II

Soprano: Hear ye, Israel, hear what the Lord speaketh; "Oh, had'st
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 streng-
then 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 founda-
tions? Be not afraid, for I Thy God, will strengthen thee."

Chorus: Be not afraid, saith God the Lord. Be not afraid, thy
help is near. Though thousands languish and fall beside
thee, and tens of thousands around thee perish, yet still it
shall not come nigh thee.

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 for thee to walk in the sins of Jeroboam. Thou hast made a grove and an altar to Baal, and served 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.

Jezebel: Have ye not heard he hath prophesied against all Israel? Hath he not prophesied also against the king of Israel? 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! Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets? Yea, by sword he destroyed them all. He also closed the heavens and called down a famine upon the land. So go ye forth and seize Elijah, for he is worthy to die; slaughter him! Do unto him as he hath done.

Chorus: 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.

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 sieze thee, that they may slay thee. Arise then, arise, and hasten forth 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. 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 have thrown down thine altars, and slain all thy prophets with the sword. And I, even I, only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

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.

Trio: 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.

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

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 labored 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! O that I now might die!

Angel: 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

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.

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.

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.

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!

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 forever.

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

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!*

BENEDICTION

PROGRAM NOTES

By the time of the prophet Elijah, circa 864 B.C., the people of Israel had largely forgotten that they owed their sole allegiance and worship to the God of their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Baal, the chief god of the Canaanites, was worshipped as the god of the elements who brought rain and who made the ground fruitful. During the reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, shrines were openly constructed to Baal and to their fertility goddess Asherah. Jezebel maintained four hundred and fifty priests of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asherah as part of her household. Baal-worship had become the court religion and led to the prophet Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

The text for *Elijah* is taken from the Biblical accounts of the prophet's life from I Kings, Chapters 17 and 18.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was born in Hamburg, Germany, and paid his first visit to England in 1829 at the age of twenty. London audiences and London society took to him immediately, not only because of his obvious musical talents, but also because of his lively and charming manner.

In the summer of 1845 Mendelssohn was approached with a scheme of major dimensions. The Birmingham Festival Committee offered him the direction of a festival planned for August, 1846, and asked him to "compose a performance" - in this case, a new oratorio. He agreed to such an undertaking, even if only ten months remained to compose the score and rehearse the performance.

The prophet Elijah had engrossed Mendelssohn's imagination as an oratorio subject ever since he had completed *St. Paul*. In 1838 he corresponded with Pastor Schubring about a text and had even made rudimentary sketches for the music. Between 1839 and 1846 other obligations had prevented him from committing his inspiration to music but now he devoted himself solely to this task.

Mendelssohn composed at a lightning-fast speed; still, *Elijah* proved to be an enormous, almost superhuman undertaking. He was dissatisfied with his first version and revised much of the score, all the while keeping close adherence to the King James version of the Bible.

The first performance of *Elijah* was given in Birmingham on August 26, 1846 and was an overwhelming triumph.

Bonnie Graham

The Ocean Grove Auditorium Choir presents
"Elijah"
by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
with the

Festive Arts Orchestra



VIOLIN I

Paul Reiser
Christine Reeves
Jennifer Farquhar
Karen Banos
David Reichman
Inna Nedorezov
Mary Hoyt
Almasd Meshejian

VIOLIN II

Martha Mott
David Levin
Valerie Levicoff
Patricia Gott
Michele LeFevre
Kathleen Thomas
Eduardo Lopez
Thomas Jackson

VIOLA

Kathleen Carroll
Susan Kaufman
Beth Dzwil Li
Pamela Nelson

CELLO

Paul Eves
Anthony Pirollo
Marlena Gal
Susan Lerner

BASS

Dennis Topper
Elizabeth Cochran

FLUTE

Carole Hall
Ellen Finks

OBOE

Rheta Smith
Coreen Levin

CLARINET

Allison Herz
Kathleen Harrod

BASSOON

Karin Meyer
Carol LaBrecque

HORN

Sarah Hussey
Joan Dowlin
Barbara Speare
Linda Brown

TRUMPET

Barbara Prugh
John Thyhsen

TROMBONE

Robert Gale
Robert Hall
Philip McClelland

TUBA

Peter Krill

TYMPANI

Kenneth Miller

