THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

May Festival

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

RICCARDO MUTI, Music Director
EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor Laureate
WILLIAM SMITH, Associate Conductor

THE UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION
DONALD BRYANT, Director

ALDO CECCATO, Conducting

SHERRILL MILNES, Baritone
(Elijah)

LOUISE RUSSELL, Soprano
LORNA MYERS, Mezzo-Soprano
(The Widow, An Angel, Soprano Solos)
(An Angel, Queen Jezebel, Alto Solos)

HENRY PRICE, Tenor
(Obadiah, Ahab, Tenor Solos)

BEJUN MEHTA, Boy Soprano
(The Youth)

FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 30, 1982, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Elijah, A Dramatic Oratorio for Soloists,
Chorus, and Orchestra, Op. 70

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809–1847)

Presented in two parts, with one intermission.

The libretto for Elijah was compiled from the Lutheran Bible (mostly but not exclusively the Old Testament) by Mendelssohn’s friend Julius Schubring, and translated from German to English by William Bartholomew. Mendelssohn completed the score on August 11, 1846, just fifteen days before its triumphant premiere at the Birmingham Musical Festival in England, a performance the composer regarded as the greatest success of his life.

Mendelssohn's remarkable fusion of the musical and dramatic is present throughout the work. Part I deals with the curse of drought on the people of Israel, and the triumph of Elijah's God over the worshippers of the idol Baal. Part II shows Elijah's banishment to the wilderness, his holy visions, and his ascent into heaven.

Sixty-sixth Concert of the 103rd Season
Eighty-ninth Annual May Festival
In order that the continuity of the work be maintained, it is requested that the audience refrain from applause until the end of each part of the program.

PART I
INTRODUCTION

**Recitative**

ELIJAH—As God the Lord of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

**Overture**

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?

**Chorus recitatives**

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!

**Duet and Chorus**

THE PEOPLE—Lord! bow Thine ear to our prayer!

DUET—Zion spreadeth her hands for aid; and there is neither help nor comfort.

**Recitative and Aria**

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. 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**

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 father's sins on 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.

**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.

**Recitative and Aria**

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

THE WIDOW—Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? There is no breath in him.

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

THE WIDOW—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 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 to the upright. He is gracious, compassionate: He is righteous.

**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? 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 followed Baalim!
Now send and gather to me, the whole of Israel unto Mount Carmel: there summons 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 I then will call on the Lord Jehovah: 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.

**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?

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

**Recitative**

**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.

**Aria**

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. Woe unto them!

**Recitative**

**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.

**Recitative and Chorus**

**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 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!

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!

INTERMISSION

PART II

Aria

Hear ye, Israel; hear what the Lord speaketh: "Oh, hast 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."

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.

Recitative

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 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.

Recitative and Chorus

THE QUEEN—Have ye not heard he hath prophesied against all Israel?

THE PEOPLE—We heard it with our ears.

THE QUEEN—Hath he not prophesied also against the King of Israel?

THE PEOPLE—We heard it with our ears.

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

THE PEOPLE—He shall perish!

THE QUEEN—Hath he not destroyed Baals prophets?

THE PEOPLE—He shall perish!

THE QUEEN—Yea, by the sword he destroyed them all!

THE PEOPLE—He destroyed them all!

THE QUEEN—He also closed the heavens!

THE PEOPLE—He also closed the heavens!

THE QUEEN—And called down a famine upon the land.

THE PEOPLE—And called down a famine upon the land.

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

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!
Recitative

OBADIAH—Man of God, now let my words be precious in thy sight. Thus saith Jezebel: "Elijah is worthy to die." So the mighty gather against thee, and they have prepared a net for thy steps; that they may seize thee, that they may slay thee. Arise, then, and hasten for thy life; to the wilderness journey. The Lord thy God doth go with thee: He will not fail thee, He will not forsake thee. Now begone, and bless me also.

ELIJAH—Though stricken, they have not grieved! Tarry here, my servant: the Lord be with thee. I journey hence to the wilderness.

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, 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.

Recitative

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

THE 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.

Chorus

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

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 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 Thy 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!

Aria

An 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.

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.

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.

Recitative and Aria

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.

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.

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.

Aria

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.

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!
UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION

DONALD BRYANT, Conductor

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, Assistant Conductor

NANCY HODGE, Accompanist

STEPHEN BATES, Manager

On May 8, sixty members of the Choral Union, under conductor Bryant, will begin a two-week concert tour of Spain at the invitation of the Spanish Ministry of Culture. The concerts are in conjunction with the Festival of the 400th Anniversary of El Greco, and will be performed in cathedrals in Toledo, Salamanca, Segovia, and in Madrid’s famed Prado Museum. Chorus members will also visit Cordoba, Seville, Granada, Valencia, and Barcelona.