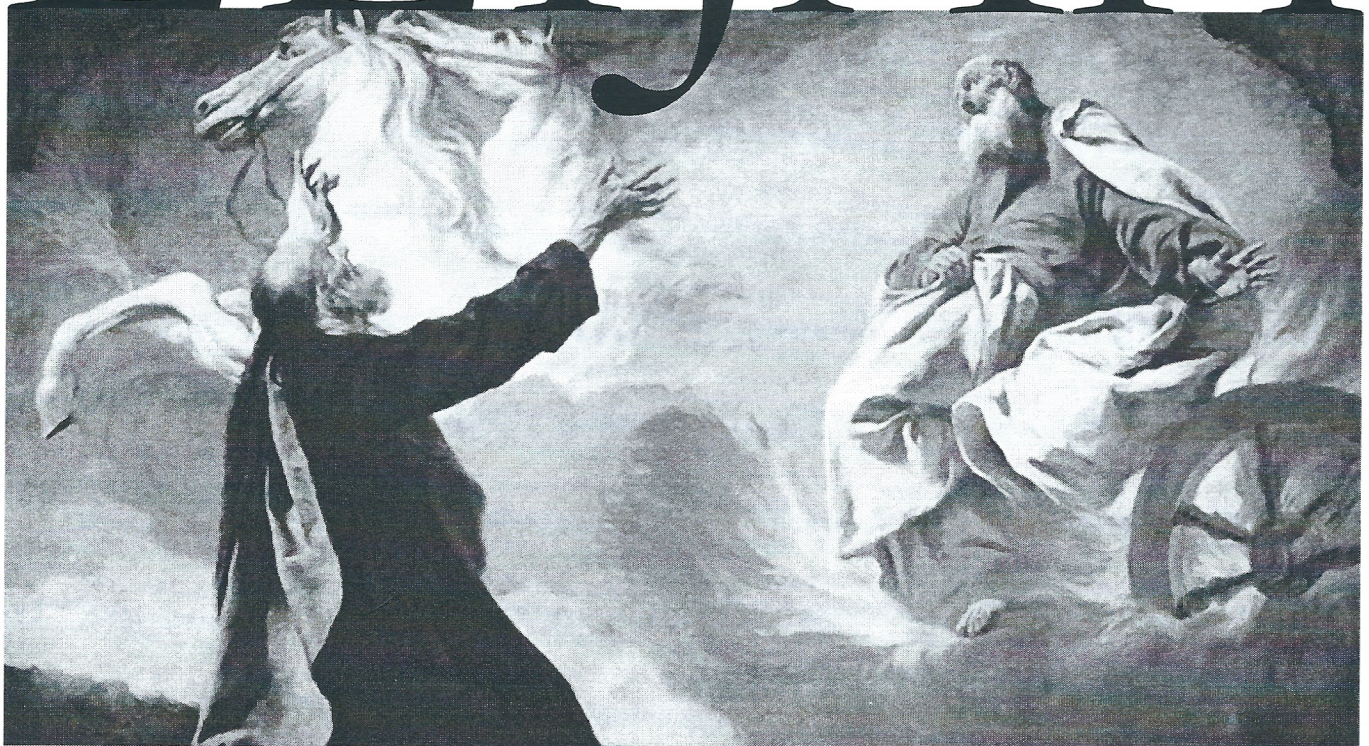


College of Marin Music Department Presents

MARIN ORATORIO

Boyd Jarrell, Director

FELIX MENDELSSOHN  
ELIJAH



WITH GUEST VOCAL SOLOISTS

Christa Pfeiffer, Heidi Waterman, Brian Staufenbiel, Zachary Weisberg,  
and Jeffrey Fields as Elijah

Saturday, Dec. 12th at 8 PM & Sunday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM Fine Arts Theater, Kentfield Campus



# ~ Marin Oratorio ~

DIRECTOR Boyd Jarrell

ACCOMPANIST Jeff Paul

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† Semi-Chorus "For He Shall Give..."

‡ Women's Ensemble "Lift Thine Eyes"

# ~ The Program ~

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

1809-1847

## Part I

{ INTERMISSION }

## Part II

Introduction. As God the Lord - *Elijah*

Overture

Help, Lord! Wilt thou quite destroy us? - *Chorus*

Lord, bow thine ear - *Duet (Soprano & Alto), Chorus*

Ye people, rend your hearts - *Obadiab*

If with all your hearts - *Obadiab*

Yet doth the Lord see it not - *Chorus*

Elijah! Get thee hence - *An Angel*

For He shall give his angels - *Semi-Chorus*

Now Cherith's brook is dried up - *An Angel*

What have I to do with thee? - *The Widow*

Give me thy son. Turn unto her, my Lord - *Elijah*

As God the Lord of Sabaoth - *Elijah, Abab, Chorus*

Baal, we cry to thee. Hear and answer us - *Chorus*

Call him louder, for He is God! - *Elijah*

Hear our cry, O Baal! - *Chorus*

Call him louder! Baal! Baal! - *Elijah, Chorus*

Draw near, all ye people - *Elijah*

Cast thy burden upon the Lord - *Chorus*

O Thou, who makest thine angels spirits - *Elijah*

The fire descends from heaven - *Chorus*

Is not His word like a fire? - *Elijah*

Woe unto them who forsake Him! - *An Angel*

O man of God, help thy people! - *Obadiab*

O Lord, Thou has overthrown - *Elijah, Chorus, Youth*

Thanks be to God! - *Chorus*

Hear ye, Israel! - *An Angel*

Be not afraid, saith God the Lord - *Chorus*

The Lord hath exalted thee - *Elijah, Queen, Chorus*

Woe to him! - *Chorus*

Man of God, now let my words - *Obadiab, Elijah*

It is enough, oh Lord, now take my life - *Elijah*

See, now he sleepeth - *Tenor*

Lift thine eyes - *Angels*

He, watching over Israel - *Chorus*

Arise, Elijah, for thou hast a long journey - *Angel*

O Lord, I have labored in vain - *Elijah*

O rest in the Lord - *An Angel*

Night falleth round me - *Elijah*

Arise, now! - *An Angel*

Behold, God the Lord - *Chorus*

Go, return upon thy way - *Chorus*

I go on my way - *Elijah*

Then did Elijah, the prophet, break forth - *Chorus*

Then shall the righteous shine forth - *Tenor*

O come, every one that thirsteth - *Quartet*

And then shall your light break forth - *Chorus*

Lord, our Creator - *Chorus*

 Please turn off all cell phone ringers and electronic devices so that all may enjoy the concert without interruption.



# ~ Biographies ~

## Jeffrey Fields

Baritone Jeffrey Fields has performed regularly throughout California as a concert soloist since moving to the Bay Area in 1999. In 1998 he was selected as an Adams Fellow at the Carmel Bach Festival and has had numerous solo appearances there since then. He also sings regularly with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists. Mr. Fields made his Carnegie Hall debut in Handel's *Messiah*. He sang the *Messiah* with the Cedar Rapids Symphony, where he also sang *Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony*. Recent engagements include *Brahms' Requiem* in Palo Alto, Haydn's *Lisola disabitata* in San Francisco, Handel's *Samson* with Philharmonia Baroque, *Acis and Galatea* (playing Polyphemus) with Berkeley Opera, Bach's *Magnificat in E-flat* and *Cantata 110* with Philharmonia Baroque, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Bach Society of St. Louis, the *Requiems* of Faure, Durufle, and Mozart, the title role in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at the Music in the Mountains Festival, Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* in Berkeley, Haydn's *Creation* in Los Angeles and Carmel, and Bach's *B Minor Mass* with the San Francisco Bach Choir. In this season's Marin Oratorio program Mr. Fields is featured in the title role of *Elijah*.

## Brian Staufenbiel

Tenor Brian Staufenbiel has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival, the Rochester Bach Festival in New York State, the Sherbrooke Summer Music Festival, and sings frequently throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. He is well known for his dramatic interpretation of the Evangelist role in Bach's *Saint Matthew* and *Saint John Passions*, as well as his comically gruesome depiction of the Roasted Swan in Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Mr. Staufenbiel is a voice faculty member and the Artistic Director of the Opera Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. With his 2006 production, he was awarded the first prize in the National Opera Association Opera Competition. In addition to live performance, Mr. Staufenbiel has recorded for Musical Heritage Society, Koch International Classics, and Helicon Records music by Alessandro Stradella, Heinrich Schutz, Lou Harrison, and Paul Bowles. His most recent recording includes the world premiere recordings of tenor arias from Lou Harrison's opera *Young Caesar* and the *Saint Cecilia Mass* (Kleos records). Mr. Staufenbiel holds a doctorate degree in vocal performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music. In *Elijah* Mr. Staufenbiel performs the roles of Obadiah, Ahab and Tenor.

## Christa Pfeiffer

Christa Pfeiffer, "a full-voiced soprano...with a keen sense of style and humor" (San Francisco Classical Voice) has an active career in oratorio, opera and recital. Appearances include performances with American Bach Soloists, Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Oakland Symphony Chorus, Festival Opera, Trinity Lyric Opera, Old First Concerts, Noon-time Concerts and Gualala Arts Concerts. On the concert stage Ms. Pfeiffer has been soloist in Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Arizona Masterworks Chorale, Haydn's *St. Nicolai Mass* at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town, South Africa and J.S. and C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificats* with the San Francisco Choral Society. Operatic roles include *St. Settlement (Four Saints in Three Acts)* with the Mark Morris Dance Group/ABS, *Ilia (Idomeneo)*, *Musetta (La Boheme)*, *Lauretta (Gianni Schicchi)* and *Gilda (Rigoletto)*. As a recitalist, she has performed a live broadcast program including Poulenc's *Banalités* on KPFA, Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, and most recently Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* at the San Francisco Public Library recital series. Recent engagements include *Eden/Eden* by Steve Reich with the San Francisco Ballet, songs by Messiaen as part of Grace Cathedral's Messiaen at 100 concert series and the role of Clori in Handel's *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*. Ms. Pfeiffer received a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from Eastman School of Music. Ms. Pfeiffer performs the roles of The Widow, An Angel, and Soprano in the *Elijah* program.

## Heidi Waterman

Heidi Waterman, Mezzo Soprano, has enjoyed a wide-ranging career encompassing everything from early music to modern opera, having performed as a soloist with nearly every major Bay Area ensemble, including the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, American Bach Soloists, AVE, San Francisco Boys' Chorus, Pocket Opera, North Bay Opera, Redwood Symphony, Berkeley Opera, Merced Opera in the Schools, and the Sanford Dole Ensemble. She counts among her operatic roles Fricka and Flosshilde (*Das Rheingold*), Bradamante (*Alcina*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Polinesso (*Ariodante*), Augusta Tabor (*Ballad of Baby Doe*), Larina and Filipyevna (*Eugene Onegin*), Erda (*Siegfried*), and Disinganno (*Il Trionfo Del Tempo E Del Disinganno*). Equally at home in concert and oratorio work, she has performed works including Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, Bach Cantatas, Mozart's *Requiem ad Solemn Vespers*, and Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*. Upcoming engagements include Respighi's *Laud to the Nativity* with *Soli Deo Gloria* and an art song recital in 2010 including Berlioz's *Les Nuits D'Ete* and Mahler's *Ruckert Lieder*. In *Elijah* Ms. Waterman performs the roles of An Angel, The Queen and Alto.





## Zachary Weisberg

Zachary has been a member of the San Francisco Boys Chorus since 2006. He has performed in many San Francisco Opera productions including *The Little Prince*, *Boris Godunov*, *La Bobeme*, and *Tosca* where he performed the role of the Shepherd Boy. Zachary has toured with the chorus to perform in the Grand Teton Music Festival (2007), France (2008), and the 2009 Presidential Inauguration. Zachary has studied piano and musical theory since the age of five and has earned certificates from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. In addition to his solo as The Youth in *Elijah*, Zachary will be performing in Contemporary Opera Marin's production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in which he will be playing Amahl.

## Boyd Jarrell, Conductor

With this concert, Boyd Jarrell begins his sixth year as Director of Choral Activities at the College of Marin. A conductor as well as bass-baritone soloist, he is familiar to California audiences through his appearances with the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the Oakland Symphony and the Santa Cruz Symphony. As a Baroque specialist, Boyd has performed with the California Bach Society, the Baroque Choral Guild, the American Bach Soloists and the San Francisco Bach Choir. He toured with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and performs frequently with the Magnificat Baroque Ensemble. He toured and recorded with the acclaimed conductor Paul Hillier and the Theatre of Voices. He conducted his chamber choir, the California Vocal Academy, in repeat engagements in the prestigious New Music Series at Mills College. Boyd appeared onstage with the San Francisco Ballet, singing the music of Brahms in the George Balanchine production of *Liebeslieder Walzer*. He served at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral as Cantor and Associate Choirmaster for over twenty-five years. He has recorded on the Angel/EMI, Harmonia Mundi, Gothic and Koch international labels.

## MARIN ORATORIO

Marin Oratorio was founded in 1961 as the College of Marin Community Chorus. It has enriched the cultural landscape of Northern California for nearly 40 years with performances of choral masterpieces from all periods from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chorus directors have included Drummond Wolff, Scott Merrick, Stan Kraczek and, for the last five years, Boyd Jarrell.

The 116 voice group has been called "Marin's best kept secret" and it seeks to meet an ever higher standard of performance. Led by Boyd Jarrell, and accompanied by Jeff Paul on piano, the chorus prepares two major concerts, one in each semester of the school year. The performances usually include orchestral accompaniment. Marin Oratorio's *Elijah* has a 35 piece orchestra. Programs in recent seasons have included music of Gabrieli with the period consort, the Whole Noyse, Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* with Paul Smith on the piano, and a concert performance of Purcell's opera, *Dido and Aeneas*. This season's performance of *Elijah* celebrates the birth of Felix Mendelssohn 200 years ago.

Marin Oratorio hosted a private salon last spring, a master singing class this fall, and will sponsor classical choral music sing-a-long events again this summer. Additional offerings are contemplated and those interested in learning more may add their names, email addresses and phone numbers to the list in the concert hall lobby.

For information about joining the chorus and about our spring 2010 program, refer to the College of Marin Spring 2010 Schedule of Classes or visit our website at [www.marinatorio.org](http://www.marinatorio.org).

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Chris Imlay LOGO AND PROGRAM DESIGN  
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# ~ Program Notes ~

By Mendelssohn's time, the oratorio genre had come a long way from its origins in the musical performance of biblical narratives in a prayer chapel or oratory from which it gets its name. Oratorios, dramatizations that were sung but not staged, became popular as acceptable replacements for secular musical drama, that is, operas, during the penitential season of Lent. One hundred years after Carissimi's *Jephthe* (1649, perhaps the original oratorio), in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Handel's many Old Testament based oratorios proved even more popular than his operas with the British public for whom he composed. His *Messiah* (1742) became the classic of the genre. A century later, throughout the German states as well as in Britain, civic choral festivals had replaced churches and worship services as the principle venue for the performance of oratorios. In the secular setting these sacred stories of ancient Israel were enthusiastically adopted as expressions of the patriotic spirit of a people, rather than a particular doctrinal religion. Mendelssohn, the pre-eminent composer and musical authority of his time in the German states, not only promoted the revival of Handel's works (also J S Bach's) but also composed two oratorios of his own: *St Paul* (1836) and *Elijah* (1846).

Mendelssohn had been mulling over the idea of an oratorio based on the Elijah story since the mid-1830's – a friend recounted that originally it was the “still small voice” episode in the Bible that sparked his interest – but had not been able to reach agreement with his collaborator as to the proper balance between dramatic scenes and lyrical meditative commentary in the total work. Mendelssohn favored the drama but did include a number of pieces that, like parts of the *Messiah*, have become well-loved favorites in the church anthem repertory quite independent of the oratorio. The Elijah idea finally came to fruition when Mendelssohn was invited to conduct the 1846 Birmingham choral festival in England, for which he also agreed to provide a new oratorio. He and Schubring compiled the text from the Lutheran German Bible and had it paraphrased in English by William Bartholomew, who also did the English versions of *St Paul* and many of Mendelssohn's songs. Barely ready in time, *Elijah* was premiered at the festival, with Mendelssohn conduct-

ing a chorus of 271 and orchestra of 125 before an audience of 2000. The work was a huge success; according to a contemporary review, “Never was there a more complete triumph.” Queen Victoria's husband, the German-born Prince Albert, inscribed

Mendelssohn's score “to the noble artist who, though encompassed by the Baal worship of false art, by his genius and study has succeeded, like another Elijah, in faithfully preserving the worship of true art. . .” Nevertheless Mendelssohn was not satisfied and immediately began revising the work. During April of 1847 he conducted the present version in six performances with choral societies in four cities in England. After the composer's death in November of that year at the age of 38, the German version of *Elijah* was premiered in Vienna as a memorial to the best-loved musician of his time.

Mendelssohn's *St Paul* was equally popular on the oratorio circuit in his day. Depicting the New Testament story of the conversion of the Christian apostle Paul and drawing on the

musical tradition of Lutheran chorales, it reflects the composer's own history: both the conversion of his Jewish family to Protestant Christianity and his discovery and revival of Bach's music. *Elijah* also symbolizes Mendelssohn's gift for mediating between his heritage and his contemporary setting. Elijah the prophet plays an important role both in Judaism, as one whose return is expected, and in Christian tradition, where he prefigures both John the Baptist and Jesus in the Gospels (e.g. the miracle of the widow and her son). Elijah has even become a Christian saint with special responsibility for thunder and lightning, weather conditions prevalent around his saint's day July 20. *Elijah* was no interfaith love fest in its time – Christianity was unquestioned as the dominant culture – but it illustrates how Mendelssohn surmounted the religious, political, and cultural divisions of his day. Musically he was able to blend the heritage of Bach and Handel, whom he studied intensely, with his own contribution to new trends in Romantic music. The oratorio tradition, in which *Elijah* is a major strand, continues to demonstrate how choral singing builds community, as we hope you will sense in Marin Oratorio's performances.

BY POLLY COOTE



# ~ Synopsis of the Story of Elijah ~

**MENDELSSOHN'S ORATORIO IS BASED** on the story of the prophet Elijah found in the first and second books of Kings in the Hebrew scripture. For the libretto the composer and his collaborator, the Lutheran pastor Julius Schubring, selected the highlights of the dramatic incidents associated with Elijah, filling out the narrative with choral commentary drawn from other biblical texts, notably the Psalms and the prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah. Elijah of course has the most prominent solo role; the chorus, the other major voice in the drama, takes many parts, speaking variously as the people of Israel, the retinue of the royal court, and the prophets of Baal, but also on occasion as the narrator of events and as the voice of Elijah's heavenly support.

Elijah appears in the biblical history as the opponent of king Ahab of Israel, who "did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him." Not the least of his wicked acts was to pursue a foreign policy of alliance with Israel's powerful neighbor by marrying Jezebel the daughter of the king of Tyre and adopting the Baal cult of her people. Elijah, an itinerant wonder worker, enters the history by declaring the onset of a drought in Ahab's Israel until further notice. His declaration opens the oratorio and is followed by the orchestral overture. Then the chorus, speaking as the people of the country, beseeches relief for their suffering (*Help, Lord and Lord, bow thine ear to our prayer*). Obadiah, the steward of Ahab's household who has remained faithful to the God of Israel, exhorts them to repent (*Rend your hearts and If with all your hearts ye truly seek me*). The people continue to despair (*Yet doth the Lord see it not*) but conclude this chorus with an assurance of God's mercy. Obedient to the word of the Lord conveyed by an angel, Elijah, a wanted man, goes east and camps in an arroyo, where he is fed by ravens and drinks from the stream until it fails. The chorus now speaks for the angelic host supporting him (*For He shall give his angels*). Again directed by an angel, he goes west to Zarephath, near Tyre, and stays with a starving widow and her son. His arrival signals the miraculous provision of an inexhaustible supply of flour and oil for them. When the son sickens and dies, Elijah appeals to God and brings him back to life.

In the next scene, before Ahab and his people, Elijah arranges a contest between Baal, represented by hundreds of prophets, and the God of Israel, represented by one, Elijah: whichever god can ignite a prepared

altar will prevail. The contest, the dramatic focus of the first part of the oratorio, proceeds with Elijah's challenge and the chorus taking part first as Ahab's subjects and then as the prophets of Baal. Despite the increasingly desperate appeals of his prophets (*Baal, we cry to thee*), Baal fails. After Elijah's prayer, backed by the chorus (*Cast thy burden upon the Lord*), God's fire descends and consumes not only the sacrifice but also the altar's wood, stones, and ground, and even the water with which Elijah has drenched it. Elijah seizes the defeated prophets and puts them to the sword. The chorus, now firmly standing with Elijah, narrates the miracle and joins in the pursuit (*The fire descends from heaven*). At Obadiah's request Elijah pleads with God to let the heavens open, as the chorus echoes his prayer. After much reconnoitering Elijah's servant boy reports the appearance of a cloud portending a storm. The rains fall at last, and the chorus of thanksgiving from the people (*Thanks be to God*) brings the first part to a close.

The second part opens with God's assurance to Elijah voiced by the chorus (*Be not afraid*) as the conflict between Elijah and the king is renewed with Queen Jezebel taking the lead in seeking Elijah's death. The chorus, now representing the anti-Elijah royal party, abets her (*Woe to him, he shall perish*). Obadiah advises Elijah to flee to the desert. While Elijah is discouraged, exasperated that his zealous efforts for God have come to naught, he receives angelic support and comfort (*Lift thine eyes, He watching over Israel, O Rest in the Lord*). After forty days journey Elijah arrives at Horeb, where at the entrance to a cave he experiences a ferocious wind, earthquake, and fire and then hears God in the "still small voice." This awesome encounter, narrated by the chorus (*Behold God the Lord*), is the climax of part two, after which Elijah is encouraged to continue on his way once more. Audiences familiar with the Scripture would have known how the biblical story went on to tell the eventual defeat of Ahab and Jezebel and the anointing of Elisha as Elijah's successor. The oratorio moves directly to the emblematic final scene of Elijah's life on earth as a fiery chariot and horses descend from the sky and in blustery gusts transport him to the sky. The chorus describes the ascent (*Then did Elijah*), and concludes Elijah's triumph with exultant praise of the Lord, the ultimate source of the life-giving benefits that Elijah had mediated for the people (*Lord our creator, how excellent thy name is*).





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