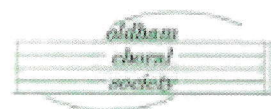


**OLDHAM
CHORAL
SOCIETY**

138th Season

**THE
STOLLER
HALL
Manchester**

**Sunday
30th April
2023
7pm**



Mendelssohn



Elijah

**Oldham Choral
Society**

**National Festival
Orchestra
(Leader: Sally Robinson)**

**Musical Director:
Dr David Cane**

Programme £2.00

More information:

<https://www.oldhamchoral.org.uk>

<https://www.stollerhall.com>

Facebook: Oldham-Choral-Society; Stoller-Hall

A Message from Oldham Choral Society's Chairman

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you this evening, the debut concert for our new Musical Director Dr. David Cane, who joined us in January.

We are also delighted to have The National Festival Orchestra playing for us, under their leader Sally Robinson.

Several singers from other societies who attended our 'Elijah Workshop' in March were keen to sing the work in full and we welcome them also in our number as our guests tonight.

The society moves forward with renewed vigour and excitement as David brings his formidable musical knowledge to bear on our interpretation and choral performance.

These last few years have been difficult for choral societies and, whilst we are now growing in numbers, several of our older members have passed away. Last month we lost Nancy Murphy, one of our longest serving members. An appreciation of her tremendous work for the society appears elsewhere in this programme. This concert is devoted to her memory.

It is 12 years since the society last performed 'Elijah'; a great favourite and challenging work within the concert repertoire. We hope you enjoy the thrilling music as the Prophet Elijah's story unfolds.

Gerard Marsden
OCS Chairman

Oldham Choral Society Patrons 2022/23

Mrs S. Andrew; Mrs P. Ashworth; Mr & Mrs C. Barratt; Mr P. Blanchard; Miss J. Bromley; Mr & Mrs J. Buckley; Mrs I. Cadman; Mr M.A.Clegg; Mr & Mrs B. Cotton; Mrs J. Hamnett; Mrs N. Hartley; Mrs B. Hatfield; Mrs M. Hood; Mr & Mrs F.S. Jones; Mrs A. Joyce; Mr K. Lewis; Mr W.G. Marsden; Mrs N. Murphy; Mrs B. Sharples; Miss J. Tunn; Mrs C. Whitehead; Mrs B. Williams

Elijah - Felix Mendelssohn

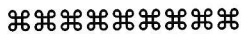
Terence Ayebare - Baritone: Elijah the Prophet

Margarita Wood - Soprano: The Widow of Zerephath; An Angel

Emma Stannard - Mezzo Soprano: An Angel; Queen Jezebel.
(*whose mission was to rid the kingdom of prophets*)

Brian McNamee - Tenor: Obadiah (*A Senior Court Official, still a believer in Jehovah, who secretly protected prophets*); King Ahab (*The upholder of the priests of Baal*)

Oldham Choral Members: (The people; the priests of Baal; Angels)



Nancy Murphy

Oldham Choral Society Member 1963-2023



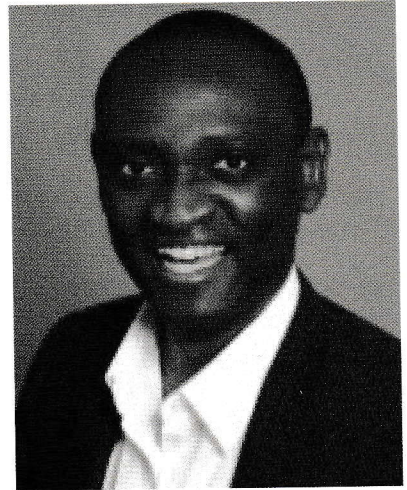
It is with a deep sense of gratitude and affection that we dedicate tonight's performance of "Elijah" to Nancy Murphy. Nancy this year completed 60 years of devoted service to Oldham Choral Society. She had a wonderful Contralto voice which encouraged and inspired other members of the choir to give of their best, resulting in the excellent Alto section of the choir. Her warm and friendly welcome, especially to any new members, was much valued. On the "admin" side of the Society, Nancy gave unstinting service. She started as "Alto Rep" on the Committee under the chairmanship of Ronnie Craig, before taking on the role herself. She served for many years before passing on the position to me. The Society recognised her valuable service to the choir by making her a Life Member, and later the position of Vice-President – a role specially created for her. She rarely missed a rehearsal, even when she and her husband Wilf were living in Arnside – a considerable two-way journey! It is rare to see such determined commitment, but as Nancy regularly said to me, "Singing is what I love, and the choir is the mainspring of my life." Nancy will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

Fred Jones: OCS President

Terence Ayebare

Baritone

ELIJAH



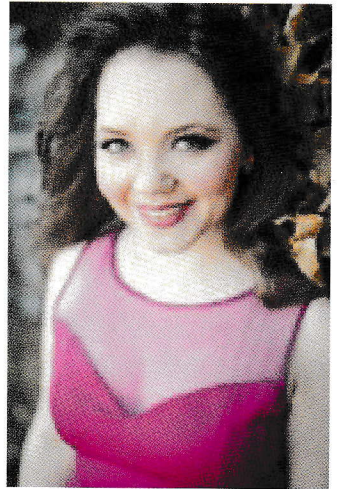
Terence Ayebare stepped aside from a career in electrical engineering to study voice and piano at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

The opera roles in his repertoire include Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Dr Falke (*Die Fledermaus*), Pangloss (*Candide*), Belcore (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Zurga (*Pearl Fishers*), Marullo (*Rigoletto*) and Silvio (*I Pagliacci*).

Among the works he has sung as a soloist with orchestra and choral societies stand Mahler's *Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen* and *Rückert Lieder*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel*, *Sea Symphony*, *Serenade to Music* and a wide range of the Oratorio repertoire.

Alongside his music-making, Terence teaches mathematics at a Grammar school in Trafford.

Margarita Wood soprano



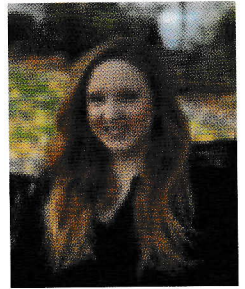
Canadian soprano Margarita Wood began her music studies in Nova Scotia, where she was raised. She holds a Master's in Music in Performance and Literature from the University of Western Ontario, and recently completed the International Artist Diploma at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Roles have included Iris (Semele), Gabrielle (La Vie Parisienne), Rodelinda (Rodelinda), Valenciennne (The Merry Widow), Cupid (Orpheus in the Underworld), Nella (Gianni Schicchi) and Queen of the Night (The Magic Flute).

Rita has been the recipient of the Dr. Don Wright Scholarship for excellence in music, the Richard Newitt Fund, the Leverhulme Arts Trust and of the Nova Scotia Talent Trust Scholarship. At the RNCM she was awarded the Clare Croiza Prize for French Song.

Emma Stannard

Mezzo Soprano



On the operatic stage, Cumbrian mezzo-soprano Emma has performed roles including: Olga *Eugene Onegin* (Opera Holland Park); Flora *La traviata* (Opera Holland Park YAP); Idamante *Idomeneo* and Enrico *Elisabetta I* (English Touring Opera); Fileno *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* and Mother *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Bampton Classical Opera); Selene *Berenice* (La Nuova Musica); Minerva *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and Pepa *Goyescas* (The Grange Festival).

On the concert platform, performances include: the English premiere of Tchaikovsky's *Oprichnik* in which she sang the role of Basmanov with Chelsea Opera Group; an opera gala with the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra, and Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with the Hallé and Kinshasa Orchestras at the Royal Festival Hall. Emma has performed song recitals at the Oxford Lieder Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, St Martin-in-the Fields and the Lewes Festival of Song and has sung with the L'Orchestre de Chambre de Genève at the Victoria Hall (Geneva) as an alumna of the Georg Solti Accademia.

Emma has a wealth of experience singing oratorio repertoire and has sung with choral societies across England including The Really Big Chorus, Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, University of Kent, Blackburn Music Society, Saddleworth Male Voice Choir, Halifax Choral Society, Congleton Choral Society, Eastbourne Choral Society and many more.

Emma trained at the Royal Northern College of Music and on the Royal Academy Opera Course. She has won the Bampton Classical Opera Competition, the Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Award and the Audrey Strange Memorial Award at the final of the Royal Overseas League Vocal Competition.

Brian McNamee: Tenor



Brian is an operatic tenor, music teacher and conductor from County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. Having initially grown up as a guitarist playing pop, rock and Irish music, Brian was encouraged by his Jazz guitarist Uncle to have some singing lessons....very quickly a love of Opera was born. After obtaining First Class Honours in Music at The University of Ulster, Brian received scholarships from The Hargreaves and Ball Trust and The Lord and Lady Lurgan Trust to study a Masters in Vocal Performance and Opera at The Royal Northern College of Music Manchester. Brian has performed internationally as a Freelance Operatic Tenor, appearing in Operas and Musicals with companies such as Netherlands Reisopera, The Xi-an Symphony Orchestra in Xi-an, China, The Consensus Vocalis Choir, Buxton Opera Festival, Holland Park Opera, Northern Ireland Opera and Opera North. Brian's Oratorio performances include Handel's *Messiah* and *Ode's for Saint Cecilia's Day*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

Alongside his opera career Brian's love of Irish music has never diminished and he has toured internationally as lead singer of The Irish Harp Orchestra, performed in Irish shows such as Celtic Dream and as guitarist for Irish Classical Crossover artists 'The Celtic Tenors'.

While at home in Northern Ireland he is the assistant Musical Director of The Omagh Community Youth Choir, a cross community youth project set up in the aftermath of the Omagh Bombing to promote peace through music.

Part One

Introduction	
Overture	
Chorus	Help, Lord
Duet with Chorus	Lord, bow thine ear to our prayer
Recitative	Ye people, rend your hearts
Aria	If with all your hearts
Chorus	Yet doth the Lord see it not
Recitative	Elijah, get thee hence
Double Quartet	For he shall give his angels charge over thee
Recitative	Now Cherith's Brook is dried up
Aria	What have I to do with thee?
Chorus	Blessed are the men who fear Him
Recitative with Chorus	As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth
Chorus	Baal, we cry to thee
Recitative	Call him louder!
Chorus	Hear our cry, O Baal!
Recitative	Call him louder!
Chorus	Baal, hear and answer
Aria	Lord God of Abraham
Quartet	Cast thy burden upon the Lord
Recitative	O Thou, who makest thine Angels, Spirits
Chorus	The fire descends from heaven!
Air	Is not his word like a fire?
Air	Woe unto them who forsake him!
Recitative	O man of God, help thy people!
Recitative with Chorus	O Lord, Thou hast overthrown
Chorus	Thanks be to God!

INTERVAL - 20 minutes

Part Two

Aria	Hear ye Israel!
Chorus	Be not afraid
Recitative and Chorus	The Lord hath exalted thee
Chorus	Woe to him!
Recitative	Man of God
Aria	It is enough
Recitative	See, now he sleepeth
Terzetto	Lift thine eyes
Chorus	He, watching over Israel
Recitative	Arise, Elijah
Aria	O rest in the Lord
Chorus	He that shall endure to the end
Recitative	Night falleth round me
Chorus	Behold, God the Lord passed by!
Recitative, Quartet and Chorus	Holy, holy, holy
Chorus	Go, return upon thy way!
Recitative	I go on my way
Aria	For the mountains shall depart
Chorus	Then did Elijah
Aria	Then shall the righteous shine forth
Recitative and Chorus	Behold, God hath sent Elijah
Chorus	But the Lord, from the north, hath raised one
Quartetto	O come every one that thirsteth
Chorus	And then shall your light break forth

The Story of Elijah

Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*, was composed in 1846 and is one of his most popular and enduring works. The libretto, written by Mendelssohn's friend and collaborator, Julius Schubring, draws on the story of the prophet Elijah as told in the Old Testament Books of Kings. The work received its first performance at Birmingham Town Hall, conducted by Mendelssohn himself, for the Birmingham Triennial Festival, to critical acclaim, with just shy of 400 performers on stage in total. One critic from *The Times* commented, "Never was there a more complete triumph; never a more thorough and speedy recognition of a great work of art."

The following year, Mendelssohn revised parts of the score for *Elijah* and the work was performed in London and in Manchester at the Free Trade Hall (less than a mile from the present-day site of The Stoller Hall).

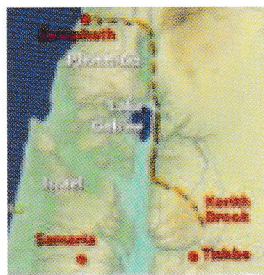


The Free Trade Hall, Manchester

Prior to the events recounted in *Elijah*, under the reign of King Ahab in the 9th century BCE, worship of the Israelite God, Jehovah, had dwindled amongst the people of Israel. Many had begun to worship a number of Canaanite deities instead. The first part of Mendelssohn's work begins with a proclamation by the prophet Elijah himself who speaks of a terrible and long-lasting drought that is to

befall Israel. Following a rousing orchestral overture, the chorus portrays the plight of the people of Israel under the absolute devastation of the drought. Obadiah, a minor prophet and a servant of Elijah, then speaks to the Israelites, exhorting them to turn away from their practices of idolatry and to renew their trust and faith in the Israelite God, Jehovah. However, the people of Israel remain unconvinced. As they see it, the drought brought upon them by their God was a wholly unjust and cruel punishment.

The setting of the action - a Map of Israel showing the mountainous and desert sites of the Cherith (Kerith) Brook flowing into the Jordan River, and Elijah's birth village of Tishbe



Meanwhile, an angel appears to the prophet Elijah, encouraging him to retreat to Cherith's brook where Jehovah will provide nourishment. Subsequently, Elijah is directed towards another place, Zarepath, where he encounters a distraught widow, whose son is dying. The widow pleads with Elijah for help, recognising him as a man of God. Elijah calls out: "Lord my God, let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!". The child is revived, and the widow rejoices, giving thanks to Jehovah.

Three years have now passed since the drought began in Israel. Elijah appears before King Ahab with the intention of restoring peace and to see God returning rain to the land. King Ahab, however, accuses Elijah of being the originator of Israel's trouble. Elijah responds confidently that it is in fact Ahab and his ancestors who have brought devastation upon the Kingdom of Israel by encouraging the worship of Canaanite deities. Elijah challenges Ahab's priests, who worship the Canaanite deity, Baal, to a contest: the priests are to sacrifice an animal and call upon their deity to light a fire under the offering.

Elijah then calls upon the Israelite God, Jehovah. The God who responds by producing fire is, Elijah suggests, to be considered the true God. The scene that follows is a thrilling musical depiction of the contest between truth and falsehood. After a spectacular display, the Israelite God is proven to be the true God and the people repent. Elijah and the people of Israel, having renewed their trust in Jehovah, call for the drought to be ended. Elijah sends a young boy out towards the sea to look for signs of rain and eventually the boy returns proclaiming that a storm is indeed coming. The first part of the oratorio ends as the chorus sing, "Thanks be to God! He laveth the thirsty land."

The Cherith Brook (now assumed to be the Wadi al-Abis in Western Jordan), where God's ravens fed Elijah during his time in the wilderness

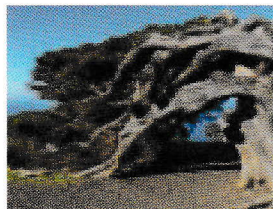


Part two opens with the beautiful aria for soprano soloist, "Hear ye, Israel": a reminder to the people of Israel to continue to place their trust in their God. Meanwhile, Elijah returns to King Ahab and accuses him once again of provoking Jehovah by worshipping Canaanite deities and by killing the righteous. As a consequence of the King's actions, Elijah proclaims, God will continue to punish the Kingdom of Israel.

Hearing this, Ahab's wife (Queen Jezebel) begins to stir up the people, convincing them that it is Elijah who is the real threat to the Kingdom of Israel. The Queen urges the people that Elijah, having been the one who placed the curse of the drought upon Israel in the first place, should be pursued and brought to his death.

Elijah flees into the wilderness where, as he sings his aria, "It is enough", he is resigned to his death. Interestingly, throughout the aria, Mendelssohn gives a prominent role to the cello. The way in which he does this is somewhat redolent of Bach's use of cello obbligato in the bass aria "Komm süßes Kreuz" (Come sweet cross) from the St Matthew Passion where the soloist reflects upon Christ's crucifixion.

'See now he sleepeth beneath a juniper tree in the wilderness.....'
(1 Kings 9:5)



That Mendelssohn should so closely draw musical inspiration from Bach's setting of the New Testament Passion story in his own telling of narrative from the Hebrew Bible is entirely befitting of his richly multi-faceted religious and cultural identity. Though Mendelssohn was baptised within the Christian Lutheran tradition, he was very much consciously proud of his Jewish family roots.

As the oratorio comes to a close, Elijah encounters a host of angels who comfort and strengthen him before he returns to the people of Israel to proclaim God's word and judgement: "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 (2 Kings 2:1 and 11)".

The work is filled with powerful choruses, arias, and recitatives and thrilling orchestral moments that vividly bring the story to life. Mendelssohn's Elijah is a masterpiece of choral music, blending dramatic storytelling with lyrical beauty and spiritual depth. Its enduring popularity is a testament to its power to inspire and uplift audiences.

David Cane - Musical Director.



David is a former choral scholar of King's College, Cambridge, where he studied for a degree in Theology and Religious studies. More recently, David has completed three years of postgraduate vocal studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, where he gratefully received the support of the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust. Whilst at the RNCM, David studied under the tutelage of Peter Wilson, and won the 'Bessie Cronshaw / Frost Brownson Song Cycle Competition' and was awarded the 'Brigitte Fassbaender Prize for Lieder'.

Recent performances as a baritone soloist include Haydn's Creation, Fauré's Requiem, Orff's Carmina Burana and Bach's Magnificat. On the operatic stage, David has played roles including 'Starveling' in Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream, 'Bob' in a production of The Old Maid and the Thief by Menotti, and 'Don Alfonso' in the RNCM's 2016 production of Cossi fan Tutte by Mozart. More recently, David created the roles of 'Hans' and 'Cobbler' in a new opera by Adam Gorb at the RNCM, Path to Heaven, directed by Stefan Janski. David has performed at the Mananan Opera Festival (established by former musical director of Oldham Choral Society, John Bethell), playing the roles of Marcello in Puccini's La Boheme, Taddeo in L'italiana in Algeri, by Rossini, and Dr. Malatesta in Donizetti's Don Pasquale.

Alongside his singing career, David teaches singing, piano and music theory and is in demand as a choral director around Greater Manchester. Since 2016, David has been the Organist and Director of Music of St. Paul's Church in Withington and, over the past 4 years, has worked as chorus master for the Manchester and District Hospitals' Choir. David has held the position of musical director of the Urmston and Flixton 'Socialites' Women's Institute Choir since 2018, and the Sale Male Voice Choir since 2021. Last year, David completed a PhD in musicology at the RNCM where he was supported by an Arts and Humanities Research Council studentship.

Oldham Choral Society Members

Sopranos

Louise Platts
Christine Whitehead
Sally Ferguson
Kirsty Haugh
Mal Hardiker
Elaine Shaw***
Val Dawson
Alison Coates
Margaret Kelly
Linda Butcher
Jules Brown
Margaret Ulyatt
Sybil Lamb
Diane McCartney
Hannah Chevier
Claire Ellis
Margaret Martin
Margaret Hood *****
June O'Grady
Patricia Heaton
Fiona Hesten**
Julia Robinson
Sheila Tolley
Brenda Wildish
Janet Roche
Marjorie Richards***
Mary Crossley
Jill Bromley***
Susan Smith
Lorna Ashton***
Jill Hamnett
Angela Robbins
Kathleen Nickson - guest

Altos

Sylvia Andrew**
Kathleen Pugh
Susan Padwell
Maureen Harrison
Eileen Scott
Lydia Seddon
Louise Whittaker
Jill Richardson
Abigail Rhodes
Carol Vaudrey**
Ann Joyce**
Elizabeth Wiener
Iva Mottley
Margaret Rawlins
Gillian Barker
Pat Ashworth**
Jo-Anna Dobbs
Helen Rigby
Janet Albiston**
Brenda Sharples
Christine Grimes***
Janet Lindley
Patricia Golden
Judith Stott
Edna Gill
Caroline Knights
Brenda Roberts
Heather Hudson - guest
Carolyn Saltmarsh - guest
Shelly Rainey - guest
Jennifer Hewitt - guest

Treble

Liam Brophy

Tenors

John Dearden
Derek Clutterbuck
Alan Reeves
Damien Gilmartin
Mike Rooke
Lawrence Croft
Barry Cotton**
Keith Wiener**
Giles Dennis
John Richards
Alan Scott
Rodney Porter
Gerard Marsden
John Doyle
Richard Blair
David Nickson - guest
Margaret Vinton - guest
Darren Midgley - guest
Willard Welsford - guest

Bass

Peter Garrity
Christopher Barrett
David Shipp
Jonathan Tranter
John Price
Carlos Bedson
Mike Edmondson
Philip Blanchard
Mike Clegg
Frank Boocock
Philip Shaw***
Bill Hardiker
Peter Kerton
Bill Marsden - guest

Years of Membership: **20; ***30; ****40; *****50 years



Save the Dates.....

Summer Celebration Concert where the choir will be joined by

Ashton Band, and organist Gary Hulme - Tickets: £12 (children: £1)

On Friday, June 23rd 2023 - At 7.30pm in

Oldham Parish Church, Rock Street, Oldham, OL1 3UH

November 2023, (date and venue to be confirmed)

French Programme, including Duruflé 'Requiem' and Poulenc 'Gloria'.

Friday, December 22nd 2023, 7.30pm

Family Christmas Concert, with Ashton Band

Oldham Parish Church, Rock Street, Oldham, OL1 3UH

If you enjoy singing and have wondered about joining a choir, why not come along and try? All are welcome! Oldham Choral Society holds regular rehearsals on Mondays 7.20-9.35 (with 15 minute interval) at Chadderton Town Hall, Garforth Street, OL9 6PY

For further details visit www.oldhamchoral.org.uk ; find us on Facebook or contact Gerard Marsden on 01706 558342

Oldham Choral Society is a member of Making Music North West and a registered charity