

Friday, January 20, 8:00 pm
Saturday, January 21, 8:00 pm

VOICE OF THE PROPHET

Henry Engbrecht, conductor
Robert Pomakov, bass
Monica Huisman, soprano
Marcia Whitehead, mezzo-soprano
Robert MacLaren, tenor
University of Manitoba Alumni Choir
University of Manitoba Singers
University Women's Choir
Bison Men's Chorus
Steve Denby, Director

PROGRAM

Mendelssohn *Elijah*

Part 1

INTERMISSION

Part 2

Sponsored by:



Friesens



MASTERWORKS

W.S.O.
CONCERT

CHORAL SERIES

W.S.O.
CONCERT

Henry Engbrecht, conductor



Henry Engbrecht is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies and Activities at the University of Manitoba. He teaches conducting and choral literature, and directs the University Women's Choir and the award-winning University Singers. The University

Singers were chosen by composer Glenn Buhr to record his *Ritchot Mass* with the Penderecki String Quartet in April 1998. They perform regularly with Winnipeg's leading professional concert organizations - the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

Henry was founding President of the Manitoba Choral Association. He is the President and Artistic Director of the Foundation for Choral Music in Manitoba.

Robert Pomakov, bass



Canadian bass Robert Pomakov has already earned attention for his unique voice and musicianship in opera, concert and recital. He is a recent graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

During the current season, he makes his Houston Grand Opera debut in the dual roles of Varlaam and Shalkalov in *Boris Godunov* opposite Samuel Ramey and conducted by Tugan Sokhiev. He repeats Varlaam for his debut at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. Other European debuts this season include the Opéra de Montpellier as First Nazarene in *Salome* and at Opéra de Marseille as Don Fernando in *Fidelio*.

Monica Huisman, soprano



Touted as the 'next great voice on the Canadian Opera scene' (Winnipeg Free Press) lyric soprano Monica Huisman has already made her mark in the musical world. Born and raised in Winnipeg, Ms. Huisman received her operatic training at the University of

Toronto in the studio of Mary Morrison. From there she soared, completing two years as resident soprano for the Vancouver Opera's Young Artists Ensemble. She performed such roles as Gretel in *Hänsel and Gretel* and Musetta in *La Bohème*.

Ms. Huisman continued on to the International Opera Centre of the Netherlands, where she made her European debut at the famous Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, performing the role of Garsenda in *Francesca da Rimini*.

PROGRAM NOTES

by Don Anderson

Elijah, Op. 70

Felix Mendelssohn

b. Hamburg, Germany / February 3, 1809;

d. Leipzig, Germany / November 4, 1847



Mendelssohn's emotional maturation led to a matching increase in the depth and substance of his music. In the mid-1830s he turned to oratorio, a type of piece

where wide experience and understanding of life are major assets. Other reasons for his new-found interest in this genre included his growing popularity in England, where oratorio had long been extremely popular.

His first oratorio, *St. Paul*, debuted in Germany in 1836. It was hailed as the first great work of its kind in the nearly 40 years since Haydn's *The Creation* and *The Seasons*. A successor to *St. Paul* being inevitable, Mendelssohn began looking for an appropriate subject within months of the first performance.

He considered St. Peter but settled upon on Elijah. "With such a subject as Elijah," he explained, "as really with any Old Testament character, except possibly Moses, it seems to me that the dramatic element must predominate, the people must be introduced speaking and acting as living persons, but it must not, Heaven forbid, become a tone painting, but a perceptible world, as in every character of the Old Testament, and the idea and emotion all should come to across to us through the mouths and manner of the participants."

After his friend Karl Klingemann was able to produce only the outline of a libretto, Mendelssohn turned to clergyman Julius Schubring, author of the text for *St. Paul*, to work with him again on *Elijah*. Progress was slow, however, leading to the project's being shelved completely. *Elijah* lay fallow for seven years, until a commission from England's Birmingham Festival rekindled Mendelssohn's enthusiasm. He and Schubring resumed their labours with great intensity, due to the short period remaining before the scheduled premiere. The composer's exertions may have hastened his premature death the following year.

Elijah was first performed on schedule in Birmingham on August 26, 1846. Mendelssohn conducted it himself, thus being able to receive its overwhelming acclaim in person. To this day, it remains second in popularity only to Handel's *Messiah* with British oratorio audiences.

Elijah is a work of superb inspiration, craftsmanship and often striking dramatic impact. Mendelssohn's writing for chorus is particularly effective. One of the most arresting moments comes at the very beginning. Elijah proclaims the drought which God brings upon the people of Israel because of the inconstancy of their faith in Him, and their worship of the pagan god, Baal. It is Elijah's appointed mission to bring Israel back into the fold.

From time to time Mendelssohn introduces semi-operatic devices in order to enhance the drama. The first such occasion comes in a scene between Elijah and a widow. God sends him to her to restore her dead son to life, and thus reaffirms her faith in Him. This touching, uplifting moment is followed by another, even more dramatic sequence. Elijah calls for a contest between God and himself on one hand, and Baal and his priests on the other. Mendelssohn's music for the false god and his followers is, like their religion, superficially attractive but ultimately shallow. Elijah's invocations of God are portrayed with great fervour. Mendelssohn then describes in music of thrilling power and urgency the Lord's causing a rain of fire to descend upon Baal's temple. Elijah next deals with the crippling drought. Once the rains return, praise is offered through the stirring chorus "Thanks be to God."

Part Two is less dramatic and more lyrical. Jezebel, Queen of Israel, who is jealous of Elijah's great deeds and angered by his pronouncements against her and King Ahab, decrees that he be slain. Elijah must flee from her wrath. An angel sends him to the holy mountain of Horeb, there to receive the Lord's judgment. Elijah's faith in himself remains shaken, but not his trust in God. After the chorus has described in thrilling fashion God's passing by and his restoring of Elijah's sense of worth, the prophet ascends to heaven in a chariot of fire. It only remains to close the score with a final chorus praising God in all His works.

Marcia Whitehead, mezzo-soprano



Marcia Whitehead is a jewel of a debut artist brightening the operatic and concert stages. A recent graduate of l'Atelier Lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal, she has been

praised for her warm, elegant voice, for her fine musicianship and her dramatic talents.

Ms. Whitehead debuted the role of Jeanne d'Arc at l' Opéra Nationale de Lyon, France with Autumn Leaf Performances in their production of *Electric Flesh*; has sung the role of Dorabella in *Così fan Tutte*, which the Atelier toured on the Canadian Maritime coast; appeared as Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor*; and as the Pastore in *Tosca* on the mainstage with l'Opéra de Montréal.

Robert McLaren, tenor



Robert McLaren studied at McGill University, earning a diploma in Education and another in Theology Studies. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Literature and Music from Sir George

Williams University before studying with l'Atelier lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal; Opera Piccola in Victoria; McGill Opera Studio, and the Banff Opera Program. He trained with Leopold Simoneau, the great Canadian Mozart tenor, and Professor Margert Kalil, a Metropolitan Opera soloist. McLaren's favourite oratorio work is J.S. Bach's *Johannes Passion*, which he performed in Stadtisches Orchester in Trier, Saarbrücken, Montréal, and Québec City under Charles Dutoit.

University of Manitoba Alumni Choir

The University of Manitoba Alumni Choir is a 'one-time happening' for this performance. It is a unique occasion for former members (and friends) of the university's choral ensembles to celebrate in joining forces to perform one of the greatest oratorio masterpieces of all time. Their presence augments the large chorus by more than 50 voices.

Henry Engbrecht, Director
Beckie Edler, Accompanist

Sopranos

Bonnie Antel
Sandra Bender
Glynis Corkal
Merina Dobson
Laura Dyck
Linda Fearn
Kim Goerzen

Altos

Tannis Collins
Erika Engbrecht
Heather Goresky
Johanna Hildebrand
Tara Johnson
Suzanna Libby

Tenors

David DeGrow
Steve Denby
Chad Falk
Tim Friesen
Greg Giesbrecht

Basses

Matthew Brough
Keith Collins
David Engbrecht
Victor Engbrecht
John Enns
Greg Fearn
Greg Giesbrecht
Justin Hintz

Cheryl Gork
Mary-Lynn Hepple
Brenda Johnson
Kim Lavilla
Natalie Miron
Deb Rogalsky
Ashley Sharpe
Loretta Thorlefsen

Danielle Mohr
Catherine Robbins
Kirsten Schellenberg
Pam Tetlock
Roberta Wiebe
Deanna Wiens

Bruce Johnson
Craig Johnson
Lawrence Pauls
Jonathan Regehr
Ted Vailas
Dylan Vencatasamy

Finn Johnson
Matthew Knight
Joshua Mohr
Nathan Poole
Goeff Owen
Chris Rempel
Conrad Schellenberg
Ted Wiens

Sopranos

Andrea Bellhouse
Lacy Eagle
Gabriela Gallo
Jacqueline Harding
Nicole Kirton
Tamara Kroeker

Altos

Isaura Clark
Pearl Friesen
Laurelle Froese
Deena Grier
Clinton Kroeker

Tenors

Denis Bazin
Matthew Deroche
Christopher Enns

Basses

Ben Campbell
Bennet Charter

Erin Lees
Ruth Reimer
Deanna Smith
Katie Smith
Jessica Strong
Andrea Truderung
Amy Wolfe
Janine Rapley
Christina Ross
Macy Schroeder
Jennifer Shaw
Lynn Siemens
Ainsley Wray

Willi Falk
Kristjan Friesen
Jan van der Hooft
Byung Jun Yoon

Matt Funk
Sean Giesbrecht

Alto

Michelle Anderson
Anne Cawker
Stephanie Davis
Kirsten Dinsdale
Laura Dowbenko
Lynn Forsyth
Kara Godin
Madeline Hildebrand
Krista Janzen
Jasmine Jegues

Lindsay Jerema
Eleanor McLeod
Colleen Metge
Keri Nieuwenburg
Amanda Peters
Christine Ronquillo
Katie Rozgonyi
Julie Schoen
Allison Scholl
Kim Tsuji

Bison Men's Chorus

The Bison Men's Chorus has been in operation since September 1984. It is a community-based chorus made up of graduate students, faculty, staff and alumni of the University of Manitoba and men from Winnipeg and the surrounding area. The repertoire consists of traditional male chorus selections, spirituals, jazz arrangements, folk and art songs, sacred music, show pieces and commissioned works.

Besides the Chorus' regular performance schedule, the group has also performed at national and international events in Vancouver, Banff, Fargo North Dakota, Morris, Crookston and St. Paul Minnesota, and Eau Claire Wisconsin.

The group has recorded three tapes and 2 CD's. The most recent, recorded over the 1999-2000 season is entitled *He(a)rd in Manitoba*.

The Bison Men's Chorus is basically a group of men who sing for the love of good music and fellowship.

Victor Boudreau	Stirling Walkes	Brian Doob
Harold Christie	Gene Walz	David Hagberg
Keith Christie	Jack Zonneveld	Bill Kawka
Rob Einarson	Alex Campbell	Bob Kellow
James Friel	Jim House	Grant Klassen
Lane Graham	Steven Howes	John Madden
Bill Guenter	Ian Hughes	Mac Morton
Tom Jones	John Long	Hugo Muller
Gary Krushel	Paul LaVasseur	John Mundie
Phillippe Morin	Gary Martine	Peter Narth
Fournier	Pat Matthews	John Peters
Bill Smith	Clare McKenty	Ted Redekop
Joe Stephanson	Derek McLean	Steve Stothers
Harvey Stevens	Harvey Peltz	Murray Wichert
Bob Stewart	Steve Denby	David Yaeger
Keith Tipples	Norman Bugge	Herman Yaeger
Mark Torchia	Ken Cairnie	

University Women's Choir

The 56-voice University Women's Choir has performed with the WSO at the New Music Festival, in the regular season in Mahler's Symphony No. 3, and in the combined Canadian/American university choirs - known in the 90s as the CanAm Choir.

A recent highlight was a performance of Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*, and in March they will sing Michael Balfe's cantata *The Page* at the 25th anniversary of the Centre for Canadian Ukrainian Studies at the University of Manitoba. The year will end with a performance of Debussy's *Nocturne No. 3* with the U of M Symphony Orchestra.

Henry Engbrecht, Director
Rebecca Ifland, Accompanist

Soprano I

Gillian Andrewshenko
Dana Coté
Colleen Demarcke
Nedra Francis
Carrie Hall
Katie Hurst
Diane Kim
Helen Lagace

Soprano II

Debbie Eismendi
Katrina German
Lauralee Gooding
Jaclyn Gulay
Brandy Hawkes-Kavanagh
Kar-yin Hui
Joyce Jung
Sunny Jung

Juanita Lonny
Melinda Mintarno
Vhana Moldowan
Kristina Procyk
Ruth Reimer
Jessica Ross
Viktoria Schäfer
Katrina Windjack

Sara Kunkel
Kristin Maddison
Gwenda Olson
Janice Olson
Anne Pham
Sheila Ray
Amanda Rempel
Barbara Torchia
Margaret Wawrykow

University of Manitoba Singers

University Singers have sung on the Centennial Concert Hall stage and with the WSO on numerous occasions, particularly in the CanAm performances and the New Music Festival. They have toured on the Prairies, to Québec and in many countries in their seven concert tours to Europe. In a Millennium project in 2000 they were invited to join eleven other Canadian university choirs (coast to coast) in Toronto to appear in the Soundstreams concert series. This live concert recording resulted in a Juno award.

Henry Engbrecht, Director
Beckie Edler, Accompanist