
Vivace!

News of The Denton Bach Society

Offering fine choral and instrumental music
to the Greater Denton Community since 1976

The
Denton
Bach
Society

April 25, 1999

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President's Message

—Carol Kernek

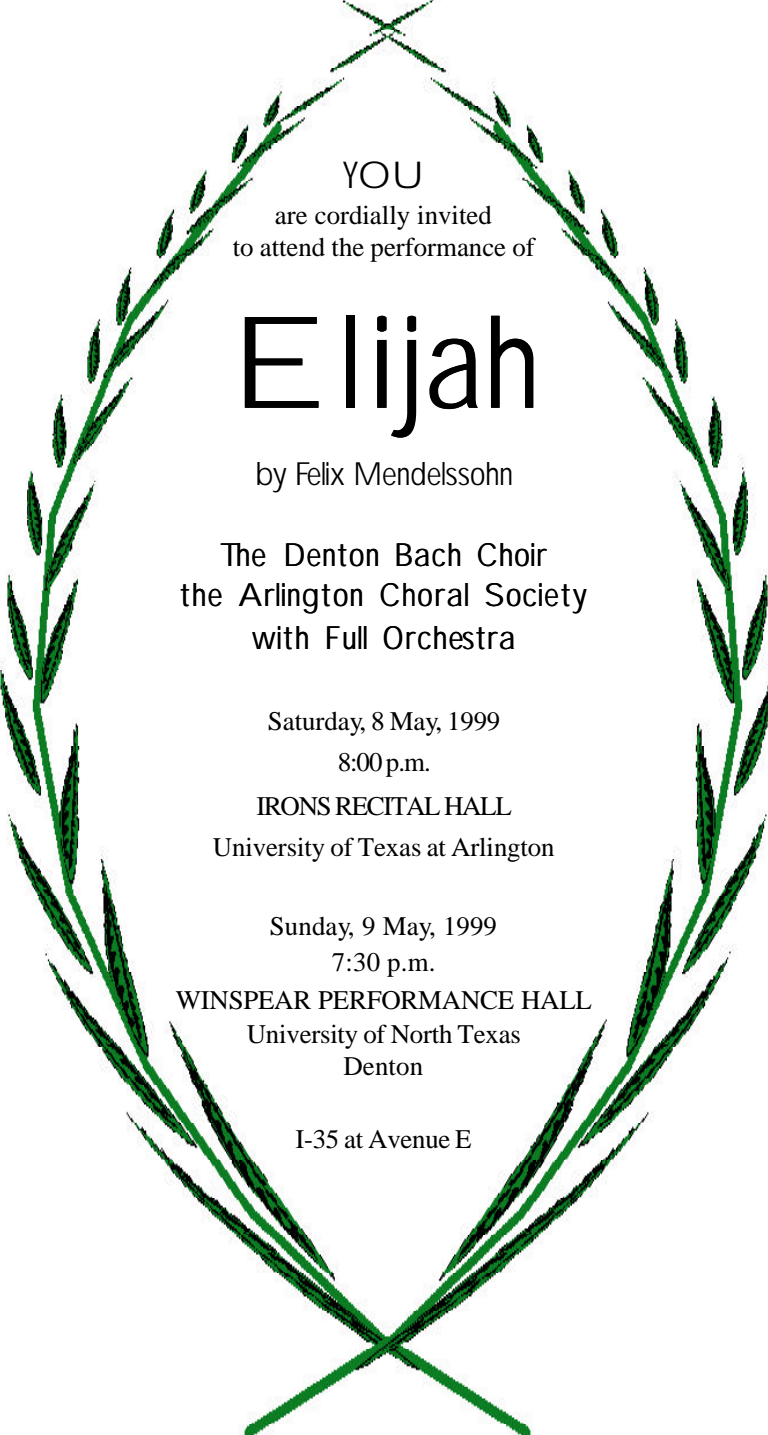
The Denton Bach Society is now approaching the "grand finale" of our season. This year's offering is Mendelssohn's incomparable oratorio, *Elijah*. Once again we are collaborating with the Arlington Choral Society, repeating a very successful joint venture of three years ago when the two groups presented Haydn's *Creation*.

A most exciting aspect of this performance is the venue: the Murchison Performing Arts Center on the University of North Texas campus. This new hall has attracted much attention in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex, and we are pleased to be one of the very first non-UNT organizations to use the hall.

It is fitting for this auspicious first DBS concert in the new hall that our audiences will see some changes in our concert dress. After much planning and not a little effort and personal expense, the women in the Bach Society choir will appear in their new performance costumes. This goal of a more professional appearance has taken more than two years to implement. We are proud to have achieved our goal!

We are also proud to have some new supporters of the Bach Society's needs. Evelyn Mielcarek of the Graduate School of Business not only formatted this newsletter, but is also in the process of designing our new web page. We hope to have information very soon. And Norma and Kevin Shivers of Good Eye Designs have graciously designed the posters and advertisements for our *Elijah* concert. We are so appreciative of these new supporters.

The Denton Bach Society is always in need of support, financially and in the sharing of talent and time. Our singers give freely of their time, but the cost of an orchestra and extensive rehearsals is considerable. In fact, it is by far the largest item in our budget. We hope you will be a part of our effort and become a contributor to the Bach Society. With this contribution you will enable the Bach Society to maintain its goal of providing the Denton area with the highest caliber of classical music.



YOU
are cordially invited
to attend the performance of

Elijah

by Felix Mendelssohn

The Denton Bach Choir
the Arlington Choral Society
with Full Orchestra

Saturday, 8 May, 1999
8:00 p.m.
IRONS RECITAL HALL
University of Texas at Arlington

Sunday, 9 May, 1999
7:30 p.m.
WINSPEAR PERFORMANCE HALL
University of North Texas
Denton

I-35 at Avenue E

PRE-CONCERT LECTURE:

6:45 p.m. in the Winspear Hall, UNT

We invite you all to attend a lecture on Elijah at 6:45 p.m. before the concert. We are very fortunate to have the expertise of John Michael Cooper, Assistant Professor of Musicology at UNT.

He holds the Ph.D. from Duke University and the B.M. and M.M. degrees from Florida State University. A Fulbright scholar, he has published on topics ranging from seventeenth-century performance practices through composers such as Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Dvorak, and Richard Strauss. He has been instrumental in 17 posthumous premieres of compositions by Felix Mendelssohn, and has produced two CD's devoted to previously unrecorded works by that composer. He is currently completing three books on Mendelssohn-related topics for Oxford University Press and Garland Press.

Michael has a special place in his heart for Elijah. His insights, we are sure, will help his listeners to a deeper appreciation

A REVIEW OF ACS & DBS

Performing Haydn's *CREATION*
May 1995

The Denton Bach Choir and Orchestra came south to Arlington last night, combining with the Arlington Choral Society for a stylish, appealing presentation of Haydn's... Creation...

This collaboration, featuring an orchestra of 36 and combined chorus of 66, was ideal for a work of this sort. The orchestra played with a light, bright tone and concise touch, the chorus was equally precise but ready to open up grandly at the proper moments.

Conductor Henry Gibbons... paced Haydn's stately procession from musical Chaos through the Creation of Humanity winningly and insightfully. This is a work that can easily collapse under a weight of majesty and reflection; Gibbons' rendition provided a perfect combination of dignity and drama...

Let's hope that this successful joint venture of Arlington and Denton can be repeated: this is a perfect group for further exploration of major choral-orchestral works.

Wayne Lee Gay
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

INTERFAITH PANEL

on CHANNEL 25

An interfaith panel on the meaning of the prophet Elijah from the perspectives of three major Western religions was taped for broadcast on Channel 25 five times during the week of April 19.

Participants representing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were Howard Watt of the Jewish congregation in Flower Mound, Father Roy Baines of St. David's Episcopal in Denton, and Mahmoud Sadri, associate professor of sociology and religious studies at TWU and UNT. Moderator Linnie McAdams introduced them and provided the TV audience with generous information and enthusiasm about our upcoming concert.

We are very grateful to these four people for providing a deeper understanding of the oratorio that the Bach Society is offering. To feel the common ground of these three religions at the very time when blood is being shed in the world over ethnic differences which are rooted in religious differences is to be filled with a sense of hope that we are a part of realizing the prophecies of world eace.

Our thanks to John Andrews, Ed Glick, Julian Long, and Ike Orloff for their enthusiasm for the project and for securing panel members, to Linnie McAdams for her gracious work as moderator, and to Channel 25 for a generous broadcast schedule of this type of community program.

PERFORMING at the NEW UNT Concert Hall!

The Denton Bach Society is thrilled at the prospect of performing in the new UNT Winspear concert hall at the Murchison Performing Arts Center at UNT! State-of-the-art acoustics in a room with a seating capacity of 1000 will allow Mendelssohn's Elijah to unfold with grandeur befitting one of the greatest Biblical stories in a magnificent musical setting.

Those of you who attended either the Murchison's gala opening or one of the concerts in the opening series already know what a privilege it is for Denton to be able to savor music in a first-class performance venue. By now, many of us have experienced the excellent acoustics in the Bass Hall in Fort Worth, which is only one of several concert halls they have designed.

After hearing several concerts in the hall and directing UNT's chamber choir in a performance in February, our musical director gives the hall high praise: "It doesn't cover the sound — it doesn't color the sound. It is so quiet that you can hear absolutely everything. It's balanced, full, and warm, whether it's the softest pianissimo or the loudest forte."

Besides the glorious sound, there are other aspects of the hall which our audience will be able to enjoy. The building is easy to find, with ample parking nearby. In the early evening, it is a lovely walk from the parking lot to the building, and then into the spacious Brock lobby. The visual pleasure from the hall itself is subtle preparation for the concert to come.

Only three years ago, the Denton Bach Society enjoyed the opening of the Campus Theatre, which has been an excellent setting for most of our concerts since then. However, a concert on the scale of Elijah, which requires a very large chorus and full-size Romantic orchestra, needs considerable space not only to accommodate 100 musicians, but also to allow full resonance of the sound they create, particularly in the great choruses of praise.

We're very grateful to UNT, Lupe Murchison, the Winspears, the Brocks (longtime supporters of the Bach Society), and many others for bringing this magnificent hall to Denton, and to our director Henry Gibbons for arranging for the Bach Society to be one of the earliest community groups to enjoy the facility.

Please join us in this celebration of fine architecture and music.

Vivace!

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The Denton Bach Society

is funded in part by grants from the City of Denton, the Greater Denton Area Council, the Arts Guild of Denton, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and the National Endowments for the Arts

Elijah: The Prophet, The Man

The following interpretation of *Elijah* was written, in a longer version, for a class at the University of North Texas by Jonathan Gibbons, the youngest singer in the Bach Choir.

Elijah is a great work - its music exciting, its spiritual message profound and relevant. These heights, however, were not achieved by conventional drama. Instead of clear plot development leading to dénouement and conclusion, it is broken into two complementary parts: Elijah's triumph over the priests of Baal in the first half and his flight into the wilderness and encounter with God in the second.

Upon first listening to Elijah, I stopped at the end of the first half, believing that the oratorio could easily end right there. Conflicts had been resolved, the drought was over, and the people rejoiced. Why more? The answer is simple: the message of Elijah's own spiritual journey.

During Part I, Elijah is established as a man of God who follows faithfully the commands of the Lord and is successful in all his endeavors. The opening chorus, however, presents a crisis: the prayers of Israel are not answered. The people are being tested and need the help of God to repent. Elijah is the superhero who conveys the divine will. In Part II, Elijah is similarly tested and, like Israel, needs God's help to survive. He must undergo an ordeal.

Part II begins by rebuking those who have strayed from the path of righteousness and proclaiming that those who fear the Lord will not suffer. Indeed, Elijah's challenge to the wicked King Ahab does not elicit the immediate divine response as did his sacrifice of the bullock on behalf of his people in Part I. Instead of a triumphant victory, he is chased out of the country. This defeat is more than he can bear. In "It is enough," Elijah expresses his frustration, anger and despair. Despite his best efforts, Israel has not repented and even seeks his death. In his defeated state he asks that the Lord let him die.

While he sleeps, choruses of angels echo the message of the opening of Part II. "Lift thine eyes" and "He, watching over Israel" reinforce the idea that, although all may seem lost, the Lord does not

abandon the faithful. Elijah, asleep, does not hear their reassurance. The command and confidence of Part I have been replaced by fear, confusion and desperation. Elijah strives to understand God's plan and pleads for God to show Himself and his wonders. His faith is wavering.

Again the angels state the virtue of perseverance. "O rest in the Lord" directly addresses Elijah's failings. "Trust in him; and fret not thyself because of evil doers," is exactly what Elijah is not doing. The Angel's counsel shows how far Elijah has fallen. "He that shall endure to the end" reinforces the message.

Elijah has reached the nadir of his spiritual journey. Defeat and flight have taken their toll; his prayers for Israel have gone unanswered. In a last gasp, he cries out to the Lord not to leave him. My soul is thirsting for Thee, as a thirsty land," is followed by an orchestral quotation of the opening chorus ("The harvest now is over"), which represents the failing faith of Israel and, here, Elijah's doubt. The Lord has subjected him to the same test that Israel faced, and Elijah has broken.

Suddenly the Angel reappears to declare to Elijah the Lord's coming. Elijah must endure the crucible not to be destroyed, but to be remade. He suffers to the end of his human ability and is rewarded with the answer to his prayers. The Lord appears in the still small voice. The Angels command Elijah to return to purifying Israel, and with renewed and restored faith, he charges forth.

In Part I Elijah appeared only as a channel for God's wonders. What sort of man he was remained a mystery. Only in Part II does he emerge as a true person with emotions, internal conflicts, and flaws. Through Elijah's trial, Mendelssohn illustrates the basic theme of the work: "He that shall endure to the end, shall be saved." The entire work is not about punishment and wrath as Part I would indicate. Instead, it is about faith and perseverance, and their rewards.

Please submit coupon with your contribution: DBS, 214 W. Hickory, Denton, TX 76201

A MOTHER'S DAY GIFT

This concert will be wonderful! We remember the excellent performance of Haydn's Creation when we collaborated with the Arlington Choral Society in 1995. In addition, we have no doubts about the accessibility of *Elijah*: the story is important (and it's in English!), the Romantic style of music is familiar and powerful, and the performance will be magnificent in the new hall. A splendid concert in a splendid hall — what a fine gift for Mom!

The Denton Bach Society needs YOU!

Please send your contributions now to ensure you will be recognized for your patronage. We thank you for your support.



Thank YOU for your *Denton Bach Society Membership*

Is your membership current?

We want to thank our patrons in the community and encourage those who have not yet contributed to do so now. We welcome your support.

I support the Denton Bach Society with a

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIFT of: \$ _____.

- \$10 or more
- \$250 or more
- \$75 or more
- \$500 or more

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Make checks payable to: ***The Denton Bach Society***



**SINGERS' FAVORITES:
THE MARCH CONCERT**

One of the things a choir director always has to deal with is choir members coming up and saying, "Why don't we sing" Every choir singer has his favorite piece, and it usually isn't long before you know what that is. And so, as I was casting about for an idea for this season's third concert, I thought, why not have the choir chose the program? I know these folks, and they are bound to come up with a great variety of splendid suggestions. And that they did, even beyond my most optimistic expectations. The Singer's Choice turned out to be a wonderful program, both for me and, I gather, many of the singers and audience members, to judge from the many positive comments I received.

Thanks to you all for running so exuberantly with this idea!

Henry Gibbons

1999-2000 SEASON PREVIEW

Take a sneak-peek of things to come in our 1999 - 2000 Season. Be sure to keep your dates open for the following events:

NOVEMBER 7, 1999

"Great Poets and Music" Choral settings of poems from Shakespeare to Eliot drawn from four centuries of music.

DECEMBER 5, 1999

The Denton Bach Society is combining its annual Christmas concert with a sing-along "Messiah" and "Victorian Christmas". The choir will sing some traditional holiday selections to round out the evening.

MAY 14, 2000

"St. John Passion" by J.S. Bach, a work that is generally regarded as one of three of Bach's greatest masterpieces.

APPRECIATION for our new women's concert dress

The Bach Society is so appreciative of the work undertaken by a committee headed by Rebecca Nunez. Her organizational skills brought this project to a conclusion with the help of her committee consisting of Heidi Klein, Holly Boyles, and Kathy Simms. We would also like to recognize Alma Gross and Charlotte Giese who were the seamstresses for this project. The concert attire worn by the Bach Choir is a necessary expense for both men and women, and we appreciate the hardship it sometimes causes. Thank you to all our singers for their many contributions!

A FOND FAREWELL

The Bach Society is greatly saddened that this will be the last concert that Howard and Marguerite Clayton will be singing with us. They have both been long time singers and supporters of our organization. Howard has been a hard-working member of our board for the past two years. He has accepted a position at another university and they will be moving in the summer. We wish them the best in their new endeavors.



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Denton, TX 76201-4118

E l i j a h

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IRONS RECITAL HALL
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University of North Texas, Denton

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