



ELIJAH

Felix Mendelssohn

10th Anniversary Concert

BUCKS COUNTY CHORAL SOCIETY

Elma Heckler, Director

April 30, 1983 — 8 p.m.
Central Bucks High School East
Buckingham, Pennsylvania

ELIJAH

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Elijah
Soprano Solos, The Widow, Angel
Contralto Solos, Angel, Queen
Obadiah, Tenor Solos
Ahab
The Youth
Angel Trio
Angel Chorus

David Scott
Paula Brown
Mertine Johns
Kenneth Garner
David Sadler
Andrew Beck
Heidi Grever, Anne Ehrhart, Evelyn Bucher
Barbara Tull, Ann McNamee
Doris Charles, Barbara Kaler, Marty Child
Clare McGraw, Aileen Parker, Martha Palaskey

PART ONE

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

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?

The deep affords 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!

Lord, bow thine ear to our prayer!

Duet
Zion spreadeth her hands for aid: and there is neither help nor comfort.

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. I 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.

An Angel
Elijah! get thee hence; depart, and turn thee eastward: thither hide thee
by Cherith's brook. There shalt thou drink its waters; and the Lord thy
God hath commanded the ravens to feed thee there: so do according
unto His word.

Double Chorus
For He shall give His angels charge over thee: That they shall protect
thee in all the ways thou goest; That their hands shall uphold and guide
thee lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

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 of the Lord sendeth rain upon
the earth.

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! Help my
son! there is no breath left in him!

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, 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?

Beth

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God: love Him 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.

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 summon 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 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.

Priests of Baal

Baal, we cry to thee: hear and answer us!
Hear the sacrifice we offer!
Hear us Baal, hear mighty god! Baal, O answer us!
Baal, let thy flames fall and extirpate the foe!

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.

Priests of Baal

Hear our cry, O Baal! Now arise, wherefore slumber?

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 prophecy! Not a voice will answer you; none will listen, none heed you.

Priests of Baal

Baal! Baal! Hear and answer, Baal!
Mark how the scoomer derideth us!
Hear and answer!

Elijah

Draw near all ye people, come to me!
Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; this day let it be known that thou art God, and I am thy servant!
O show to all this people that I have done these things according to thy word! O hear me Lord and answer me!
O show this people that Thou art Lord God; and let their hearts again be turned!

Angels

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.
He never will suffer the righteous to fall: He is at thy right hand.
Thy mercy, Lord, is great; and far above the heavens.
Let none be made ashamed that wait upon Thee!

Elijah

O Thou, who makest Thine angels spirits;
Thou, whose ministers are flaming fires, let them now descend!

The People

The fire descends from heaven!
Before Him upon your faces fall!
The Lord is God: O Israel hear! Our God is one Lord:
And we will have no other gods before the Lord!

Elijah

Take all the prophets of Baal; and let not one of them escape you; bring them down to Kishon's brook, and there let them be slain.

The People

Take all the prophets of Baal; and let not one of them escape us; bring all, and slay them!

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 ev'ry day; and if the wicked turn not, the Lord will whet His sword; and He hath bent His bow, and made it ready.

Obadiah

O man of God, help Thy people! Among the idols of the Gentiles, are there any that can withstand the rain, or cause the heavens to give their showers? The Lord our God alone can do these things.

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, 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.

Youth

Hearst thou no sound of rain? Seest thou nothing arise from the deep?

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!

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 forever.

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 TWO

Soprano

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

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 has 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 shall know He is the Lord.

The Queen

Have ye not heard that he hath prophesied against all Israel?

Chorus

We heard it with our ears.

The Queen

Hath he not prophesied also against the king of Israel?

Chorus

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!

Chorus

He shall perish!

The Queen

Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets?

Chorus

He shall perish!

The Queen

Yea, by sword he destroyed them all!

Chorus

He destroyed them all!

The Queen

He also closed the heavens!

Chorus

He also closed the heavens!

The Queen

And called down a famine upon the land.

Chorus

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

Woe to him, he shall perish! 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!

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, 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.

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.

Obadiah

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.

Angel Trio

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.

An Angel

Arise, Elijah, for thou hast a long journey before thee. Forty days and
forty nights shall 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 thine 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!

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.

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.

An Angel

Above Him stood the Seraphim, and one cried to another:

Angel Chorus

Holy, holy, holy is God the Lord—the Lord Sabaoth! Now His glory
hath filled all the earth.

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.

Chorus

Then did Elijah the prophet break forth like a fire; his words appeareth like
burning torches. Mighty kinds 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.

Tenor

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in their heavenly Father's
realm. Joy on their heads shall be for everlasting, and all sorrow and
mourning shall flee away for ever.

Solo Quartet

O come, every one that thirsteth; O come to the waters; O come unto Him.
O hear, and your souls shall live 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 be thy reward.

Lord, our Creator, how excellent Thy Name is in all the nations!
Thou fillest heaven with thy glory. Amen!

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

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DAVID SCOTT, bass, of Sparta, N.J., a graduate of Westminster Choir College, has soloed with the Masterwork Chorus and Orchestra in New York, the Philadelphia Singers, Singing City, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and symphony orchestras in Houston, Grand Rapids, and Wilkes Barre. A choral music teacher in the Newton, N.J. public schools, Scott has won medals with his choirs in international competition.

PAULA BROWN, soprano, a native of North Wales, is a recent graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music, where she was a member of the Opera Department. She has appeared as soloist with the Philadelphia Singers, Pennsylvania Pro Musica, and University of Pennsylvania Collegium Musicum. She recently appeared with the Pennsylvania Opera Theater as Paguette in Bernstein's *Candide*. This is Ms. Brown's second appearance with the Bucks County Choral Society.

MERTINE JOHNS, Philadelphia, is the alto soloist with Young Audiences, Inc. and the Philadelphia Oratorio Choir. She has performed with the Bethlehem and Philadelphia Bach festivals and with opera companies throughout United States and Europe. Recently Ms. Johns was the soloist in the *Relativity of Icarus* by Gerard Samuel for the Joffrey Ballet of New York.

KENNETH GARNER, formerly of Lancaster, is tenor soloist at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Chestnut Hill. A graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, he recently performed in Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* at the Music Festival, Corfu, Greece. This is his second performance with the Bucks County Choral Society.

ANDREW BECK, Ackermanville, a seventh grader at Bangor Junior High School, is a soprano soloist with the Singing Boys of Pennsylvania/Pocono Boy Singers of Stockertown. The group formed in 1970, has performed in England, Wales, Mexico and throughout the United States. Under the direction of Dr. Bernard Schade, the boys recently completed a tour of the Midwest.

DAVID SADLER, Blooming Glen, tenor, is a member of the Bucks-Mont Opera Company. A student of Neal Tracey, he recently sang the title rôle in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman*.

The **MUSICA SACRA ORCHESTRA** is a highly skilled chamber ensemble of professional players drawn from the rich musical heritage of the Philadelphia area. Under the leadership of Director of Music Joel Krott, the orchestra, together with the Musica Sacra chorus, presents its own annual concert series in various locations throughout the metropolitan area.

JOAN GURNIK, Jenkintown, serves as accompanist for the Choral Society. A graduate of Beaver College, she is a Fellow of the American Guild of Organists and is organist-choirmaster at All Hallows Episcopal Church, Wyncote.

ELMA HECKLER, Hatfield, is a graduate of Juniata College, Huntingdon, and holds a Master's degree in choral conducting from Westminster Choir College, Princeton. She was formerly Director of Music at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, and Pleasantville Church, Chalfont.

Musica Sacra Orchestra

Joel Krott, Director

Violin I

Diana Vuolo, Concertmistress
Almasd Meshejian
Mary Hostetler
James Smith
Kathy Hanneman

Violin II

David Reichman, principal
Kevin Annett
Christine Wetzel
Gregory Teperman

Viola

Lisa Hammell, principal
Davis Barnett
Ruth Brons

Cello

Dane Anderson, principal
Dorothy Bogusz
Cheryl Patton

Bass

Dennis Topper
Peter Conover

Flute

Ronna Ayscue
Laurie Davis

Oboe

Donna Wiley
Lisa Kozenko

Clarinet

Charles Salinger
James Kilik

Bassoon

William Woods
Patricia Topper

Horn

Michael Johns
Kathy McGinnis
George Barnett
Joan Dowlin

Trumpet

Michael McGuffey
Nancy Dowlin

Trombone

Scott van Patten
Ed Cascarella
Phillip McCullian

Tuba

Jay Krush

Timpani

Douglas Walter

BUCKS COUNTY CHORAL SOCIETY

SOPRANO

*Elizabeth Burke, Chalfont
Doris Charles, Doylestown
Mary Clarke, Richboro
*Doris Daniels, Pineville
Sharon Dreese, Quakertown
Anne Ehrhart, Newtown
Jean Elfman, Doylestown
Janet Fryling, Chalfont
Geri George, Yardley
Heidi Grever, Colmar
Lynne Guest, Richboro
Linda Gyath, Richboro
Jinny Haring, Furlong
*Verna Horoff, Doylestown
Norma Johnson, Newtown
Barbara Kaler, Hatfield
*Pat McCann, Chalfont
Ann McNamee, Horsham
Helen O'Connor, Richboro
Mary Scherrer, Doylestown
Barbara Tull, Doylestown

ALTO

Margaret Armstrong, Doylestown
Marcia Averre, Langhorne
Evelyn Bucher, Lansdale
Marty Child, Telford
Audrey Close, Doylestown
Mayo Dunn, Ivyland
Lola Glass, Doylestown
Frances Graczyk, Warrington
Cathy Grunden, Hatboro
Joan Gurniak, Jenkintown
Alice Laquer, Gardenville
Martha McCleary, Rosemont, N.J.
Clare McGraw, Newtown
June McKay, Warminster
*Lois Moore, New Britain
*Peggy Nace, New Britain
Martha Palaskey, Ambler
Aileen Parker, Bethayres
Ethel Quiring, Warminster
Jane Schmidt, Fort Washington
Pam Skinner, Yardley
*Frances Walle, Doylestown
Doris Winter, Plumsteadville

TENOR

*Carola Benecke, Doylestown
*Norman Christy, Chalfont
Rod Dunn, Ivyland
Ennis Grunden, Hatboro
Gerry Hartzel, Souderton
Harold McCleary, Rosemont, N.J.
*John William Moore, Chalfont
Kurt Pfitzer, Quakertown
David Sadler, Blooming Glen
Dennis Sadler, East Greenville

BASS

Carl Bergeson, Holmcong
Clyde Bucher, Lansdale
Hugo Ciccotosta, Hatfield
Merrill Detweiler, Sellersville
David Fryling, Chalfont
John Grever, Colmar
Jack Haring, Furlong
Carl Hennenway, Ambler
Jerry Krutz, Perkasie
Carroll McNulty, Doylestown
Peter Ott, Ottisville
Walfred Saari, Lansdale
Robert Senulis, Hatboro
Ralph Swanson, Chalfont
Kingdon Swayne, Newtown
Ron Tempest, Hatboro
Howard Winters, Perkasie

*Charter Member

10th Anniversary Season Officers

President	Carl Bergeson
Vice President	Marty Child
Secretary	Robert Senulis
Treasurer	Audrey Close
Choir Accompanist	Joan Gurniak

For information about joining the Bucks County Choral Society or to arrange for an audition, please call Linda Gyath, 322-7615.



1973-1983
Celebration in Song

HISTORY OF The Bucks County Choral Society

This history of the Bucks County Choral Society has been prepared by Fran Waite and Kingdon Swayne for members and friends of the Society in connection with the Society's tenth anniversary year, 1982-83.

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

Beginnings - The Johns' Era

In the 1972-73 school year, David Johns was director of choral music at Central Bucks West High School and a master's degree candidate in music education. He sensed a gap in the cultural life of the Doylestown community, and resolved to try to fill it. That winter he placed an advertisement in the *Daily Intelligencer* inviting singers interested in starting a community chorus to come to a first rehearsal in the choral music room at Central Bucks West. Seven brave souls responded. But it was an idea whose time had come, and by the end of the school year the group had forty voices, an official identity as the Bucks County Choral Society, and a successful concert under its belt. That first concert was held on the afternoon of June 3, 1973, in the Lenape Junior High School auditorium. Accompanied by Tina Buonorno, the performance featured excerpts from *Brigadoon* and other pieces.

Six months later, on December 2, 1973, the chorus performed its second and last concert under David Johns' direction at Lenape. The work was Handel's *Messiah*, accompanied by members of the Bucks County Symphony Orchestra. Current members who have been with the Society since its first year include Carola Benecke, Elizabeth Burke, Norman Christy, Doris Daniels, Vera Horoff, Pat McCann, Lois Moore, Bill Moore, Peggy Nace and Fran Waite.

HOLDING THE FORT - The Moore Era

Early in 1974, determined to continue, the group reorganized and sought a new director. Into the breach stepped a member of the tenor section, John William (Bill) Moore. With a master's degree in music education from West Virginia University, Bill's musical specialty is the trombone, but he willingly stretched his skills to encompass the new field of choral directing. The Salem United Church of Christ became the center of the Society's musical life at that time. The first concert under Bill's direction took place on June 2, 1974, featuring the Vivaldi *Gloria*.

During the Moore era there began what became a series of four annual fall concerts to benefit the Martin Luther King Scholarship Fund of the Central Bucks Council of Churches. The choir also performed during the Mercer Museum's Christmas festivities. Accompanists during this period were Tina Buonorno and Marsha Page.

Another Interim, Yes; Stagnation, No! - The Sauter Era

It is hard to characterize the next two and a half years in the life of the Society. During the Moore era the Society's leaders were busily beating the bushes for a permanent director. Not finding the right person, in the spring of 1975 they persuaded Ruth Sauter to take the baton temporarily. Ruth is a graduate of Beaver College (A.B.) and Temple University (M.A.), with advanced studies in Trenton State College and Westminster Choir College. She is a music teacher and choral director at Central Bucks East High School. The Society had found a qualified professional, but Ruth felt unable to make a long-term commitment. In the end, she submitted to a series of arm-twistings by Society officers, led by Carola Benecke, and stayed on as temporary conductor for two and a half years.

But these were not years of marking time. Ambitious works were tackled, including Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, the Mozart *Requiem*, Poulenc *Gloria*, and the premiere of Finley Shugard's *The End of the Days*. There were fruitful collaborations with the Bucks County Symphony Orchestra, the Pro Musica Orchestra, and the Temple University Orchestra. Accompanists during this period included Ruth McConnell, Carolyn Kängel, Sharon Bertha and Margaret Lea.

The Sauter era was also a time when, with some prodding from Ruth the Society's officers were giving serious thought to housekeeping matters—incorporation, bylaws, tax exempt status, funding strategies. These were to come to fruition in the next era.

THE SECOND FIVE YEARS

Dynamism out of Stability - The Heidler Era

Whether in the world of engineering or the world of the performing arts, stability is an essential precondition for dynamic movement. The rocket must have a stable launching pad; artistic organizations need a stable base to support the creative ferment.

In the fall of 1977 the Society found the stability of artistic leadership it had been seeking when Elma S. Heidler of Hatfield was persuaded to become the music director. Elma holds a B.S. degree in music from Juniata College and a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from Westminster Choir College. She has been music director at Zion Mennonite Church in Souderton and at Pleasantville United Church of Christ in Chalfont.

During most of the same period the Society also enjoyed stability of administrative leadership. Audrey Close served as President from 1977 to 1981. Collaborating closely with Elma, and with the support of an effective board of directors and other volunteers from among the singers, Audrey led the Society to a new state of organizational and fiscal stability. The Society was incorporated and ratified its bylaws in 1977. It established tax-exempt status in 1979. It recruited its first contributing patrons in 1977 and its first contributing business patrons in 1979. It received its first substantial grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts in 1979. Atlantic Richfield Corporation and the Prudential Insurance Company have also made substantial grants, beginning in 1980.

While the board of directors addressed the financial fundamentals, Elma was busily revolutionizing the Society's approach to musical fundamentals. Some of us learned for the first time that we sang with our feet and our shoulders and our belly buttons as well as with our vocal chords, lungs, and diaphragms. Consciousness of the whole self—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual—as a musical instrument soon followed.

Pre-rehearsal warm-up sessions were full of surprises—back rubs, dancing, “yawn-sighs,” singing through a “hole” in the middle of the forehead. We were amazed to discover that the distance from B up to C was longer than the distance from C back down to B. We have never quite figured out what Einstein would make of that, although he could probably handle it better than Newton!

Members of the Society in good standing in the fall of 1977 were “grandfathered” into tenured status, but newcomers had to survive a demanding audition. As applicants began to exceed the Society's practical capacity of 60, qualified singers had to be turned away. Even the “grandfathered” submitted to a compulsory audition in 1981, causing a good deal of anticipatory agony that was allayed when the time came by Elma's caring and supportive audition style. And of course we knew in advance that the purpose of the audition was not to “fire” us but to get a sense of our strengths and weaknesses in the interest of building a better blend of voices.

There were two important milestones in 1978. First, Joan E. Gurniak joined the Society as accompanist on piano and organ, replacing Kim Heindel. Joan is music director and organist for All Hallows Episcopal Church in Wyncote. As accompanist, she sets an impossibly high standard of focused alertness—never misses a downbeat, plays eight parts on eight staves with consummate ease, sneaks the piano quietly into an *capella* rehearsal to sustain the wavering tenors, slyly hits the concluding chord at the end of an *capella* passage to give the chorus a gentle measure of its flatness.

Second, there came to be celebrated the start-of-the-season ritual of a full day's musical workshop. These began at Deer Park near New Hope and moved this fall to Bucks County Community College.

All this mind-boggling activity has a single goal: the pursuit of excellence in that elusive quality choristers call their “sound”—the product of disciplined control of breathing, enunciation, pitch, volume, tonal quality, neural impulses, various bodily cavities, sternums, shoulders, belly buttons, diaphragms, knees, feet, and probably a few other things as well.

Has excellence merely been pursued, or is the Society actually *capturing* a bit of it now and then? Let us look at the record. The Society no longer performs only in Doylestown, but is in demand for concerts in other parts of the Bux-Mont area—Souderton, Chalfont, Holland and Newtown, so far. In the fall of 1982 it moves on to wider audiences with an appearance at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 1981 the Salem United Church of Christ was filled not once but twice for the Festival of Christmas Music, setting a pattern for the future. The grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts weren't political or capricious; they followed careful auditions of concert performances by critical officials.

Major new musical works of the Hecker era have included a Pachelbel *Magnificat*, the Mozart *Coronation Mass*, a concert version of Bizet's *Carmen*, and Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* and *Lieblied* *Waltzes*, as well as such modern works as the Duruflé *Requiem*, Randall Thompson's *Frostiana*, and Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*.

L'ENVOI

At the ripe old age of ten, the Bucks County Choral Society is a little like a partially filled glass of water. Should one describe it as half full, or half empty? Should one emphasize the progress made, or the high goals set but not yet fulfilled? What is clear to even the most casual observer is that there is present in rehearsals and performances, in board meetings and refreshment committee sessions, a spirit of creative interaction between leader and followers that produces joy and satisfaction and, from time to time, flashes of that elusive excellence whose pursuit will remain the Society's principal preoccupation. And those who contribute the most will continue to gain the most from the experience.

ADDENDUM

Tonight's performance of *Elijah* climaxes the celebration of the tenth anniversary. The season has also included performances at the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the annual Festival of Christmas Music at which time *Magnificat* by Richard Averre was premiered; a combination concert/workshop with two Harrisburg area choirs under the direction of Robert Page; the annual choir workshop with Richard Averre of Bucks County Community College and Gail Poch of Temple University; and area concerts at churches and retirement communities.

THE BUCKS COUNTY CHORAL SOCIETY extends its sincere appreciation to the following individuals and businesses who have given their financial support. With their help, we have been able to grow as a choral organization and take our music to a larger segment of the community in Bucks and Montgomery counties.

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