

# B Sharp's Studio 6

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## **Standing Ovation for Mendelssohn's ELIJAH**

*presented by*

**THE PHILADELPHIA CHORUS, Raquel García, Artistic Director**

**SUNDAY, November 19, 2017 at 4 PM**

**at PHILADELPHIA EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL**



John Miles, Baritone



Sharon Rhinesmith, Mezzo-Soprano



Justin Gonzalez, Tenor

Do you have to be a highly knowledgeable classical music expert to enjoy an afternoon with The Philadelphia Chorus? After seeing ELIJAH, the fall 2017 concert at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral, the answer is clearly "No" - beautiful music is for everyone. Before the show even begins, the program reassures the listener. It is full of information about composer Felix Mendelssohn and the story that ELIJAH is telling.

Even better, each segment is numbered and titled with a second follow along section that includes all the words. The section of the church hosting the concert dates from Victorian times with its vaulted ceiling and stained glass windows. What better place for a musical piece inspired by the Old Testament.

And the concert begins. At the center of the action is conductor Raquel Garcia. She leads with love and precision and seems to draw the best out of the performers. A modest band is seated at floor level with the black clad chorus members arranged in rows behind them. The acoustics are phenomenal and there isn't a bad seat in the house as far as the sound is concerned. However, for anyone wanting to see the performers, particularly the soloists, claiming a chair at the front of the house is recommended.

ELIJAH soars and weaves as layered voices complement and overlap each other. Despite the complexity of the piece, the result is always crisp and clean. Lending voice to ELIJAH is soloist John Miles. His notes are rich and resonant, a treat for the ear. Sharon Rhinesmith provides the primary female vocals. Her range is impressive and emotive. Tenor Justin Gonzalez sang for several male roles, his voice strong and memorable. Other soloists include Gwen Noone, Kristin Kalbach, Sarah Folsom-Kovarik, and Johanna Schweitzer. The Choir of Angels featured Maddie Cummings, Michele Davis-Tortu, Kristin Kalbach, Sofia Saavedra, Allison Terzyk, Sarah McCague, Daphne Hanford, and Jennifer Toll.

For someone with a formal musical background, or a Mendelssohn enthusiast, the Philadelphia Chorus' staging of ELIJAH would be a remarkable opportunity to hear an outstanding presentation of a great piece of music. For the rest of us, it was a remarkable opportunity to hear an outstanding presentation of a great piece of music. Beautiful music is something everyone can enjoy. Thank you to the Philadelphia Chorus for a lovely afternoon!

The Philadelphia Chorus, founded in 1951,  
is a community choir of approximately 65 singers  
under the direction of Raquel García  
and accompanist, Judith Large.

(610) 352-3565 [www.thephiladelphiachorus.org](http://www.thephiladelphiachorus.org)

## *About the Reviewer*



**Annie Lannak** has been involved in theatrical productions in the region both on and offstage for a number of years. She has served on the Board at Footlighters and enjoys writing reviews. Anne is pleased to note that her first one-act play, "Mind Games" won an award at the most recent PACTfest. Anne's father, Bob Beavins, a Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast, has performed in numerous community theater productions and all four of Anne's children have also appeared on local stages.

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