

PRESS RELEASE

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## ROGUE VALLEY CHORALE'S "ELIJAH" TO FEATURE CHRIS THOMPSON

Chris Thompson will return to the area to sing the lead role in the Rogue Valley Chorale's presentation of Felix Mendelssohn's "Elijah" on February 24th and 25th. Thompson sang the role of Figaro (the barber) in Rogue Opera's production of "The Barber of Seville" in 1993.

Chris Thompson, who received numerous awards and recognitions as a student at Loyola University in New Orleans, has performed widely in operas and recitals in the United States and Europe. In 1992, he was awarded a scholarship for post-graduate study at the Guild Hall School of Music and Drama in London, England, where he won the John Ireland Prize. He also received a scholarship to study at The Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. He is now completing doctoral studies and teaching at the University of Kansas.

Other guest vocalists in "Elijah" will include tenor Erik Connolly, as Obadiah, and boy soprano Samuel Jackson as The Youth. Connolly, who studied at the San Francisco Conservatory and has performed widely in the Bay area, recently starred in the Rogue Opera production of "The Pirates of Penzance." He lives in Ashland. Samuel Jackson lives in Medford, attends Lone Pine School and sings in the Rogue Valley Children's Chorus.

Felix Mendelssohn's musical dramatization of the story of the Biblical prophet, Elijah, is one of his most popular works. It is regarded, with Handel's "Messiah," as one of the world's greatest oratorios. Its varied musical textures have pleased audiences for 150 years.

Rogue Valley Chorale members featured in solo parts include Anita Caster, Virginia Dickie, Linda Fountain, Phil Lind, Diane Newland, Susan Olson and Jean Tyndall.

The Chorale will be accompanied by Linda Borecki on the Schoenstein Organ and guest artist, Jodi O'Connell, on the piano. Lynn Sjolund will conduct at First Presbyterian Church at 8th and Holly in Medford, at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 24th and at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 25th. Tickets are available from Chorale members, at the Britt box office or at the door. For more information, please call 899-1583 or 772-2163.