

Westchester Chorale Presents Handel's *Israel in Egypt*

Concert celebrates the 100th anniversary
of Temple Israel of New Rochelle

BY ALICE LONGWORTH

"PRODUCING PERFORMANCES THAT INTRIGUE, delight, illuminate and inspire" is the mission of The Westchester Chorale. So be prepared.

There will be vivid musical depictions of plagues—whether of locust, fly or frog—a river of blood, hail storms, the Red Sea parting, Pharaoh's horsemen sinking like stones, and the joyous exultation of freedom from slavery finally won, when the 70-voice Chorale, joined by an 18-piece baroque orchestra and 6 soloists and conducted by Daniel Paget, presents G.F. Handel's oratorio *Israel in Egypt*.

The concert takes place on Sunday, May 4, 2008, at 3pm at Temple Israel of New Rochelle (1000 Pinebrook Boulevard).

Praised as one of the greatest choral epics ever written, *Israel in Egypt* retells the Passover story of the Jews' exodus from slavery in

ancient Egypt. The libretto consists of selected passages from the Hebrew Bible, mainly Exodus and the Psalms.

The performance, which takes place shortly after the conclusion of Passover, celebrates the 100th anniversary of Temple Israel of New Rochelle, and will be the first concert ever given by the Chorale in a synagogue. The piece will include music restored from a long-neglected original first part (*Lamentations of the Israelites*) and will be presented as a three-part work with double choruses, just as Handel intended.

The Chorale has assembled an accomplished cast of soloists from both operatic stage and synagogue. They are Mary Ann McCormick, mezzo-soprano of the Metropolitan Opera; Giuseppe Spoletini, bass-baritone and faculty member at Manhattan School of Music; and



Music director Daniel Paget rehearses with members of The Westchester Chorale.

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four area cantors: Benjie-Ellen Schiller, soprano, of Bet Am Shalom Synagogue in White Plains; Shira Adler, soprano, of Temple Beth Shalom in Mahopac; Mo Glazman, tenor, of Congregation Kol Ami in White Plains; and Erik Contzius, bass-baritone, of Temple Israel of New Rochelle.

Led by Daniel Paget, who has served as music director since 1984, The Westchester Chorale is an auditioned avocational chorus dedicated to the performance of great choral-orchestral music. The 70 men and women who form the Chorale are avid singers drawn from many walks of life—teachers, students, doctors, homemakers, professional musicians, lawyers, retirees. Their current choral home and rehearsal space is at Greenville Community Church in Scarsdale, NY.

“Every rehearsal is like a master class in music,” marvels Judith Wartels, alto section leader and former board president of the Chorale. “And we have so much fun!”

“Dan [Paget] has taken us on an extraordinary journey,” she states. “With him we have explored many different corners of the musical forest.”

Described by *The New York Times* as “a stimulating interpreter whose energy and enthusiasm are thoroughly infectious,” Mr. Paget—currently a senior professor of music at John Jay College of Criminal Justice—is a musician of diverse accomplishments as conductor, composer-arranger, pianist, lecturer and educator. His works have been performed around the country and abroad.

The Westchester Chorale is a member of Westchester Arts Council, Eastchester Arts Council, and Chorus America. The Chorale invites you to join them as chorale members, audience, supporters, volunteers and participants at their sings.

Tickets for *Israel in Egypt* range from \$15 to \$50. Children under the age of five will not be admitted. For ticket purchases, information and directions, please call 914.961.4546 or visit www.westchesterchorale.org. ■

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