



## Concert Details

Friday, January 29,  
2016, 8:00 p.m.

Cary Hall, 1605  
Massachusetts  
Avenue, Lexington

Pre-concert talk at 7:00  
p.m. by Dr. Ellen Harris,  
Professor of Music, MIT,  
free to all ticketholders

Tickets: \$25-\$69,  
available by phone:  
617-868-5885 or online:  
[www.cantatasingers.org](http://www.cantatasingers.org)

A second performance  
will take place on Sunday,  
January 31 at 2:00 p.m.  
at NEC's Jordan Hall, 30  
Gainsborough Street, Boston

# Cantata Singers Bring Israel in Egypt to Cary Hall

By Jane Whitehead

Plagues of frogs, flies, lice, fire and hailstones will descend on Cary Hall on Friday, January 29, when Cantata Singers perform Handel's epic choral masterpiece *Israel in Egypt*.

A close second to *Messiah* in fame and popularity, the oratorio is a dramatic re-telling of the Biblical Exodus story, written in the space of one month in 1738. Often performed in shortened form, Cantata Singers present the work in its original three-part version.

### Music for Troubled Times

"*Israel in Egypt* contains some of Handel's most vivid music, and it's a piece that packs an enormous wallop," says Cantata Singers Music Director David Hoose, now in his thirty-third season with the group. With its themes of mourning, oppression, suffering and

deliverance, the piece speaks to us today as vividly as to its first audiences in eighteenth-century London, says Hoose.

"The human condition hasn't changed. There are people living in bondage, and there are worries about the world, but there is also hope, and this piece gives us both," he says. The work's climax – a triumphant celebration of the escape of the Israelites from Egypt and the drowning of Pharaoh's armies in the Red Sea – is "one of the most heart-stopping, uplifting choruses I know of," says Hoose.

### Historic Hall, New Sound

As a Lexington resident for over twenty years, Hoose is delighted to be performing in Cary Hall. Two years ago, Cantata Singers rehearsed Mendelssohn's *Elijah* there, and "loved the space," and its sound, which Hoose found "generous

and warm and clear at the same time."

A major goal of the recently completed \$8 million renovation of the historic Cary Memorial Building was to transform the 820-seat Battin Hall into a world-class performance venue and lecture hall, with replacement of the HVAC system, a permanent stage extension, and structural changes to improve accessibility.

Home base for Cantata Singers is Jordan Hall, at the New England Conservatory, where the group performs three or four concerts a year. "But we also



want to reach out beyond Boston and the center of Boston," says Hoose, a Professor of Music at Boston University who has conducted in venues all over the world, from Boston's Symphony Hall to Singapore.

"Our hope is that Boston – which does not have a large number of fine

*Cantata Singers, continued on page 14*

venues for classical music – will begin to develop and find unexpected places where the audiences are comfortable, the musicians are happy, and the sound is beautiful, and Cary Hall may be coming into its own on that front,” he says.

### **Lexington's Got Talent**

Israel in Egypt features a strong contingent of Lexington musicians, in addition to Hoose and his wife, Amy Lieberman, Cantata Singers' Assistant Conductor. Tenor Charles Husbands, who retired as a systems librarian at Harvard University Libraries in 2007, has sung with the group since its founding in 1964, and lived in Lexington for over forty years. This will be his third performance of the piece under Hoose's baton. "It's a choral marathon," he says, "but an exciting piece to sing, as the dramatic burden is on the chorus."

Librarian by day, diva by night, mez-

the caliber of the singers and Hoose's insightful direction.

"As a Jewish person, I love this text," says Webb, who sings an aria about the plague of frogs, and admits that her biggest challenge will be not to smile too much. Of the work as a whole, she says: "It's a big thrilling piece - Handel's writing is so direct – very vividly etched, with lots of wonderful bravura choral writing."

Prize-winning soprano soloist, music educator and chorister Alexandra Whitfield has spent many hours in Cary Hall, as her mother Elizabeth Whitfield is concert mistress of the Lexington Symphony Orchestra. "I'm thrilled to be back in one of my hometown performance spaces with Cantata Singers," says Whitfield, a 2007 Lexington High School graduate, who now lives in Somerville, and will perform the soprano solo in the Part One quartets.



zo-soprano Jennifer Webb hopes that patrons and friends from Cary Library will come along and hear what she does in her off-hours. A member of the King's Chapel choir whose taste for early music was formed in the Oberlin Collegium Musicum, Webb has found singing with Cantata Singers an exhilarating musical experience, thanks to

"I feel proud to perform with and serve on the board of this premier choral group," says Epp Sonin, President of Lexington Symphony Orchestra and founder of the Lexington Music School. "This performance is a great opportunity for Lexingtonians to experience this fantastic professional group in Cary Hall," she says. "Don't miss it!"