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2017-18

UNIVERSITY OF

LES DÉLICES Clara Rottsolk, soprano | Debra Nagy, baroque oboe & recorder Julie Andrijeski, violin | Emily Walhout, viola da gamba | Mark Edwards, harpsichord

**Nov. 12, 2017 | 3:00 p.m. |** Beall Concert Hall



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## **MYTHS & ALLEGORIES**

#### Sonate L'Astrée

François Couperin (1668-1733)

Selections from Ulysse (1703)

Jean-Féry Rebel (1666-1747)

Suffriray-je toujours Sarabande Beaux lieux, vous ne sçauriez me plaire

#### **Cinquième Suite**

François Chauvon (c.1690-c.1740)

Sicilienne *La Rêveuse* Allemande *La St. Germain* Caprice *Le Cury* Gavotte en rondeau Chaconne en rondeau *La Besson* 

#### Les Sirènes

Thomas-Louis Bourgeois (1676-1750)

#### INTERMISSION

Fidelle

Rebel

### Le Sommeil d'Ulisse Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre (1665-1729)

Selections from *Ulysse* 

Rebel

C'est vous, mon cher Ulysse Chaconne Que c'est un plaisir extreme

> Clara Rottsolk, soprano Debra Nagy, baroque oboe & recorder Julie Andrijeski, violin Emily Walhout, viola da gamba Mark Edwards, harpsichord





Les Délices SUN., Nov. 12, 2017 | 3PM

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**THE DANISH STRING QUARTET** SUN., Feb. 18, 2018 | ЗРМ



SIMONE DINNERSTEIN, PIANO SUN., Mar. 18, 2018 | 3PM

a chamber musician throughout North America and Europe, and she has recorded extensively with the Boston Camerata, La Luna and The King's Noyse. A resident of Waterown, MA, Ms. Walhout maintains a small studio of private students and coaches several devoted viol consorts.

First prize winner in the 2012 Musica Antiqua Bruges International Harpsichord Competition, Canadian harpsichordist and organist Mark Edwards is recognized for his captivating performances, bringing the listener "to new and unpredictable regions, using all of the resources of his instrument, [...] of his virtuosity, and of his imagination" (La Libre Belgique). An active chamber musician, he is the artistic director of Poiesis, collaborates regularly with Les Boréades de Montréal, and has performed with Il Pomo d'Oro, Pallade Musica, and Flûtes Alors!. He has also given solo recitals at the Utrecht Early Music Festival and Brussels' Bozar and performed concertos with a number of award-winning ensembles, including II Gardellino (Belgium), Neobarock (Germany), and Ensemble Caprice (Canada). He is currently a PhD student at Leiden University and the Orpheus Instituut, Ghent, where his research examines the intersection of memory, improvisation, and the musical work in seventeenth-century France. Since 2016, he is Assistant Professor of Harpsichord at Oberlin Conservatory.

Homer's Odyssey endures as one of the best-loved adventure tales of our time. The famous epic follows its hero, Ulysses, on a ten-year adventure as he returns home to Ithaca in the wake of the Trojan War. Along the way, he and his crew encounter lethargic Lotus Eaters, and the monstrous Cyclops, Polyphemus. Ulysses must also resist the not-so-friendly feminine wiles of the witch Circe, the deadly Sirens, and the nymph Calypso, who keeps him and his men captive for seven years. All the while, the goddess Minerva (also known as Pallas) serves as Ulysses' guide and protector, helping him to avert disaster and overcome the many obstacles that separate Ulysses from his long-faithful wife, Penelope. The Odyssey's central theme – and the source of its universal appeal – is the enduring strength of love, hope, and fidelity, and their ability to withstand tests of time and tribulation.

Scholars believe that Homer's epic was a song sung to a rapt audience before it was ever written down, so it is fitting that we return his story to music by creating a program featuring French Baroque re-tellings.

Our program begins with *L'Astrée*, a trio sonata by François Couperin (1668-1733) dating to the 1690s. Named for the goddess of innocence and purity, the piece has one of the most unusual, evocative openings of any piece of Baroque chamber music. Its slow, static, exploratory – even recitative-like – opening transports listeners to another world before the piece erupts in a thrilling fugue. Like many of Couperin's early experiments with the sonata, *L'Astrée* was later published as *La Piémontoise* in his seminal 1726 collection Les Nations.

Despite its beautiful music and attractive subject, Jean-Féry Rebel's *Ulysse* suffered the same fate as virtually every other opera written between the time of Lully and Rameau. That is, it saw only a few

performances and was never revived (though excerpts from Ulysse did get recycled into a later operatic pastiche). Jean-Féry Rebel (1666-1747) studied both composition and violin with Lully, and steadily climbed the professional ladder at Versailles: by the turn of the eighteenth century, he was performing in the opera orchestra, and by 1705 became its conductor (the batteur de mesure). In 1718, he assumed the post of chamber composer to the King. The libretto for Ulysse loosely adapts Homer's text, creating a tangled love triangle between Circe, Ulysses, and Penelope. We present two airs from Act 1: Souffriray-je (in which Penelope pleads with her long-absent husband to return) and the lilting *Beaux lieux*, where Penelope explains that beautiful gardens and other pleasant distractions will fail to distract her from her longing. By the end, however - with the help of the goddess Minerva - Penelope is happily reunited with Ulysses in Ithaca, which we witness in two airs from Act 5 of Ulysse: C'est vous, mon cher Ulysse, and Que c'est un plaisir extreme.

Rebel's earliest works are his violin sonatas and trios, which date from the last decade of the seventeenth century. Like Couperin's early experiments with these genres, many of Rebel's sonatas bear evocative titles. Rebel's *La Fidelle* (Faithful One) is meant to evoke the enduring hope and faith of Penelope in the context of this program. *La Fidelle's* searching, improvisatory opening over a bass pedal-note sets the stage for a series of contrasting sections that range from a brilliant and fast-paced fugue, to a simple elegant air that devolves into heart-wrenching suspensions, followed by a regal *lentement* consisting entirely of double-stops on the violin, and finally a virtuosic fantasy that recalls the musical sighs and chromaticism of the sonata's opening.

Though François Chauvon's Cinquième Suite contains no direct reference to the Homerian tale, we might imagine the different

repertoire ranging from 1300-1800 on the Chandos, Avie, CPO, Capstone, Bright Angel, Naxos, and ATMA labels, and has had live performances featured on CBC Radio Canada, Klara (Belgium), NPR's Performance Today, WQXR (New York City) and WGBH Boston.

Julie Andrijeski is celebrated as a performer, scholar, and teacher of early music and dance. She has been recognized for her "invigorating verve and imagination" (Washington Post), "fiery and poetic depth" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*), and "velvety, consistently attractive sound" (New York Times). In addition to her frequent performances with Les Délices, she is Co-director of the ensemble Quicksilver, Artistic Director and Concertmaster of the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, and Principal Player with Apollo's Fire, the Cleveland Baroque Orchestra. Ms. Andrijeski joined the Music faculty at Case Western Reserve University in 2007, where she is now Senior Instructor, teaching early music performance practices and directing the baroque orchestra, chamber music, and dance ensembles. She won Early Music America's Thomas Binkley Award, for outstanding achievement in performance and scholarship, and was named a 2016 Creative Workforce Fellow by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (Ohio), supporting her research and performance of 17thcentury music in manuscript.

**Emily Walhout** grew up playing the cello, but discovered her love for baroque bass lines at Oberlin Conservatory, where she took up the baroque cello and the viola da gamba, thus launching an active career in early music. Ms. Walhout was a founding member of La Luna, and was a member of The King's Noyse from 1987 through 2004. Ms. Walhout has played viola da gamba or principal cello for the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Seattle Baroque, Portland Baroque, Les Boréades, Les Violons Du Roy, New York Collegium, and Trinity Consort (Portland, OR). She has toured as "Pure and shining" (Cleveland Plain Dealer) soprano Clara Rottsolk has been lauded by The New York Times for her "clear, appealing voice and expressive conviction" and by The Philadelphia Inquirer for the "opulent tone [with which] every phrase has such a communicative emotional presence." In a repertoire extending from the Renaissance to the contemporary, her solo appearances with orchestras and chamber ensembles have taken her across the United States, the Middle East, Japan and South America. In collaboration with pianists Sylvia Berry and Byron Schenkman, and guitarist-lutenist Daniel Swenberg, Ms. Rottsolk has given recitals of song from the 17th to 21st centuries in venues including the Goethe-Institut Boston, Town Hall Seattle, St. Mark's Church Philadelphia, and Swarthmore College. Her recordings are Myths and Allegories, French Baroque cantatas with Les Délices and "supple and stylish... and unflaggingly attractive" (Gramophone Magazine) Scarlatti Cantatas with Tempesta di Mare on the Chandos-Chaconne label.

"A baroque oboist of consummate taste and expressivity" (Cleveland Plain Dealer) with a musical approach that's "distinctly sensual...pliant, warm, and sweet," (New York Times), **Debra Nagy**, **director**, is one of North America's leading performers on the baroque oboe. She plays principal oboe with the American Bach Soloists, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, and Apollo's Fire, and is a regular guest with the Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Early Music Festival, and Portland Baroque Orchestra, among other ensembles. Following studies at the Oberlin Conservatory, Conservatory of Amsterdam, and Case Western Reserve University, Debra has received many awards for her creative and scholarly pursuits including first-prize in the American Bach Soloists Young Artists Competition, a 2009 Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and a 2010 Creative Workforce Fellowship from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. She has recorded over 30 CDs with movements –from the dreamy Sicilienne (*La Rêveuse*) to the final, hypnotic Chaconne en rondeau as evocative of Odysseus's seven years on the island of Ogygia under the spell of the goddess Calypso. The pervasive use of rondeau form in this suite enhances its bewitching quality, while traces of the pastoral (heard in the Sicilienne, the pesante Gavotte, and even in the lilting rhythms of the Chaconne) echo Homer's own description of this entrancing island: "Thickets of alder, black poplar, and cypress, with horned owls, falcons, and garrulous sea-crows roosting in their branches, sheltered Calypso's great cavern. A grapevine twisted across the entrance. Parsley and irises grew thick in an adjoining meadow, which was fed by four clear streams." A student of François Couperin, Chauvon (c.1690-1740) had a rich imagination and a distinctive, witty voice that shines through each of his few, extant works.

Thomas-Louis Bourgeois (1676-1750) is hardly a household name, but he made a major contribution to the genre of the French cantata. At the time of Les *Sirènes*' publication, Bourgeois could regularly be heard singing countertenor at Paris's Opéra. Following six years as *surintendant de musique* in the service of the Duke of Bourbon, he appears to have struggled to hold onto professional appointments in various provincial cities (Lyons, Poitiers, Dijon), ending his career in obscurity and poverty. *Les Sirènes* (1708) dates from the beginnings of his success as a composer. The music is concise and strong, effectively conveying the tantalizing allure of the sirens (*L'Amour par nos voix vous appelle*) and the dangerous peril should Ulysses and his crew fall prey to them.

The cantata became enormously popular in early eighteenthcentury France. Borrowing both form and function from opera, French cantatas include Italianate *da capo* arias, extravagant and dramatic instrumental interludes that were adapted from the stage, and metrically-flexible recitatives. As in most *Tragédie Lyrique* (the French operatic form pioneered by Jean-Baptiste Lully), allusions honoring King Louis XIV frequently appear in the cantata repertory (in tonight's program, the story of the benevolent King Alcinous is a clear reference), and a *Deus ex machina* frequently sweeps in at the end to save the day (cue: Minerva/Pallas). The final aria in a cantata frequently offered a moral to the listener. In the case of *Les Sirènes*, the temptation of Beauty cannot and will not be denied – i.e. resistance to Love is futile!

Ulysses's encounter with the Cyclops, Polyphemus, stands out among the Odyssey's most memorable tales of magical encounters and near-death experiences. While Ulysses ultimately escapes Polyphemus's clutches by blinding him with a wooden stake, he makes the terrible mistake of boastfully revealing his identity.

Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre's Le Sommeil d'Ulisse picks up the story at this moment, as Ulysses tries to flee the island of the Cyclops while attempting to conceal his fleet of ships from Neptune (Polyphemus's father). Naturally, Neptune finds them and whips up a terrifyingly dangerous storm complete with thunder and lightening in the violin's swirling Tempête. Minerva sweeps in to protect Ulysses, offering him refuge and respite by way of a deep, magical sleep (this sommeil is evoked with lilting dotted-rhythms, slow-moving harmonies, and the unreal, fused sound of muted violin and recorder). La Guerre (1665-1729) rose to prominence as a child prodigy, when, at the age of five, she was already performing on the harpsichord and singing at the court of Louis XIV. She was the first woman to compose an opera in France, and one of the very few to publish her own compelling, creative compositions. Le Sommeil d'Ulisse is included in her final collection of Cantates françoises (1715), published fifteen years before her death.

Les Délices (pronounced *Lay day-lease*) explores the dramatic potential and emotional resonance of long-forgotten music. Founded by baroque oboist Debra Nagy in 2009, Les Délices has established a reputation for their unique programs that are "thematically concise, richly expressive, and featuring composers few people have heard of." The New York Times added, "Concerts and recordings by Les Délices are journeys of discovery." The group's debut CD was named one of the "Top Ten Early Music Discoveries of 2009" (NPR's Harmonia), and their performances have been called "a beguiling experience" (Cleveland Plain Dealer), "astonishing" (ClevelandClassical.com), and "first class" (Early Music America Magazine).

Les Délices made its New York debut before a sold-out audience at the Frick Collection in May 2010. Highlights from recent seasons included performances for Music Before 1800, Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, San Francisco Early Music Society, the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments, and at Columbia University's Miller Theater. In addition to touring engagements, Les Délices presents its own annual four-concert series in Cleveland art galleries and at Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights, OH, where the group is Artist in Residence. Les Délices has been featured on WCPN, WCLV and WKSU in Ohio, WQXR in New York, NPR's syndicated Harmonia and Sunday Baroque, and had their debut CD featured as part of the Audio-guide for a special exhibit at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (Watteau, Music, and Theater). Les Délices 3rd CD, "Age of Indulgence," was released on the Navona label in June 2017.

– Debra Nagy