

LES DÉLICES PRESENTS 'THE LEADING MAN' ON MAY 3 & 4, 2014

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Les Délices' new program *The Leading Man* features the unique voice and dynamic stage-presence of tenor Jason McStoots, who performs feats of musical heroism, absurdist comedy, and ravishing beauty in this program of operatic excerpts by Lully, Boismortier, Leclair, and Rameau. Les Délices performs at William Busta Gallery on Saturday, May 3, 2014 at 8:00pm, and in Herr Chapel at Plymouth Church (2860 Coventry Rd., Shaker Heights) on Sunday, May 4, 2014 at 4:00pm (a pre-concert lecture by Dr. Georgia Cowart begins at 3pm).

The Leading Man is inspired one of the 18th century's most famous tenors, Pierre Jélyotte. Jélyotte was the Paris Opéra's leading man and comic muse from the mid-1730s through the 1750s, performing lead roles in virtually of Rameau's operas among many others. Known for his kind and humble nature, Jélyotte easily took to roles that cast him as a hero, a fair and just king, or a faithful lover. Yet he also excelled in comedy: cross-dressing for the role of deluded frog-princess in Rameau's *Platée*.

Like Jélyotte, Jason McStoots is a gifted actor with an inspiring, high-tenor voice. He has been a vital presence in over a half dozen productions by the acclaimed Boston Early Music Festival where one reviewer observed: "McStoots has more personality and charm than a roomful of other tenors, and he enlivens whatever production he is in." For Les Délices, Jason plays the lover, hero, and fool in operatic highlights from Lully's *Amadis*, Leclair's only opera *Scylla et Glaucus*, and Boismortier's pastoral *Daphnis et Chloe*. We also feature music from Rameau's comedy *Platée* and the opera-ballet *Pygmalion*, whose gorgeous music tells the famous story of the love-struck sculptor whose own statue comes to life before his eyes.

In addition to tenor Jason McStoots, the program features Les Délices' director Debra Nagy (baroque oboe), baroque violinists Scott Metcalfe & Cynthia Black, viola da gamba player Josh Lee, and harpsichordist Michael Sponseller.

Les Délices is a small ensemble that makes a big impact with entertaining, thought-provoking programs presented in unique and intimate settings that enhance the listening experience. Les Délices' informal gallery concerts celebrate Cleveland's flourishing arts community and simulate a salon atmosphere similar to the one in which this music was first heard and enjoyed. Saturday evening concerts are followed by a wine and cheese reception and conversation with the artists. Sunday afternoon concerts are preceded by pre-concert lectures starting at 3pm, and are presented in the gorgeous acoustics of Plymouth Church's Herr Chapel in Shaker Heights, where Les Délices is Artist in Residence.

Tickets for all concerts in the series (\$20-\$35) are available at www.lesdelices.org. Student Rush tickets (\$5) are available at the door.

About Jason McStoots, tenor

Described by critics as "light and bluff, but neither lightweight nor bland, and with exemplary enunciation" and as having "a silken tenor voice" and "sweet, appealing tone" Jason McStoots has performed around the world and the US. His recent appearances include Boston Early Music Festival's production of Handel's *Almira* (Tabarco), his European debut in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and a Japanese tour of the *St. Matthew Passion* under the direction of Joshua Rifkin, Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers* in Seattle and Portland under Stephen Stubbs, and Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*. He has appeared with such groups as Boston Lyric Opera, Pacific MusicWorks, Boston Camerata, Handel Choir of Baltimore, New Haven Symphony, Tragicomedia, and the Tanglewood Music Center. He can be heard on recordings with Blue Heron and Cut Circle, as well as on the Grammy-nominated recording of Lully's *Pysché* and on recordings of Charpentier, John Blow, and Handel with the Boston Early Music Festival on the CPO label.

About Les Délices

Les Délices' (pronounced *Lay Day-LEASE*) polished, expressive, and dynamic performances of masterpieces and little-known works from the French Baroque have been garnering critical acclaim. Founded in Cleveland in 2006, Les Délices brings together artists with national reputations who share a passion for this exquisite yet seldom heard repertoire. Les Délices' debut CD "The Tastes Reunited" 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 has been featured on WCPN's Around Noon and WKSU's In Performance, NPR's syndicated Harmonia and Sunday Baroque, and had their debut CD featured as part of the Audio-guide for a recent special exhibit at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (Watteau, Music, and Theater). In addition to touring engagements, Les Délices presents its own annual concert series in modern art galleries, where audiences enjoy intimate, informal performances in venues that celebrate Cleveland's flourishing arts community, and at Shaker Heights' Plymouth Church, where the group is Artist in Residence. Visit www.lesdelices.org for more information.

Debra Nagy, director, has been called "a baroque oboist of consummate taste and expressivity" (Cleveland Plain Dealer). One of the nation's most sought after early double reed specialists, Debra performs with baroque ensembles and orchestras in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Cleveland, Denver, Philadelphia, and New York, and has been heard at the international Early Music Festivals of Boston, Berkeley, Regensburg, and Antwerp. A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory and Case Western Reserve University, Debra was the first-prize winner in the 2002 American Bach Soloists Young Artist Competition, and spent 2002-2003 in Brussels and Amsterdam as the recipient of a Belgian American Educational Foundation Grant. She was honored to receive a 2010 Creative Workforce Fellowship (generously funded by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture), and currently teaches as a Lecturer in Early Music Performance Practice at Case Western Reserve University. Debra can be heard on the Capstone, Bright Angel, Naxos, Avie, Hänssler Classics, CPO, Yarlung, and ATMA labels.

Georgia J. Cowart (pre-concert lecturer) has published three books and a number of articles on music, the arts, and cultural politics in early modern France. Her most recent book, *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV and the Politics of Spectacle* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), focuses on the shifting intersections of the arts, ideology, and aesthetics at the court of Louis XIV and in the Parisian public sphere in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. She is currently at work on a book manuscript, "Performing a New France: Watteau, Spectacle, and the Sunset of Absolutism." Dr. Cowart is Professor of Music at CWRU, where she has served as chair of the department of music at CWRU and co-director of the Joint Music Program between CWRU and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

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