



**LES  
DÉLICES**  
DEBRA NAGY, DIRECTOR

**Wednesday, December 20 at 7:30pm**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Akron

**Thursday, December 21 at 7:30pm**

West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church, Rocky River

**Friday, December 22 at 7:30pm**

Cultural Arts Center at Disciples Church

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# NOEL, NOEL

## PROGRAM

### **From darkness**

*Traditional, arr. Debra Nagy: The Coventry Carol*

*The Shortest Day by Susan Cooper*

### **HOPE**

*John Playford: Divisions on Greensleeves (What Child is This)*

*arr. Nagy: Drive the Cold Winter away*

*Traditional: I saw three ships (instrumental)*

*Christmas Eve by Christina Rossetti*

### **PEACE**

*Tarquinio Merula: Canzonetta Spirituale La Nanna*

*Bartolomé de Selma y Salaverde: Canzon no. 3*

*Dave Lucas: Three Kings*

### **JOY**

*Michael Praetorius, arr. Nagy: In dulci Jubilo*

*Christian Geist: Wie schön leuchtet schön der Morgenstern*

*Diane Kendig: At the CHRISTMAS TREE on a line by Seamus Heaney*

### **LOVE**

*Praetorius, arr. Les Délices: Es ist ein ros entsprungen*

*Dietrich Buxtehude: Also hat Gott die Welt beliebt, BuxWV 5*

*Thomas Campion: Now Winter Nights Enlarge*

### **To Light**

*Traditional, arr. Les Délices: The Wexford Carol*

*Traditional: Tomorrow will be my dancing day (instrumental)*

*Arr. Les Délices: Make we joy now in this fest*

## **Artists**

*Amanda Powell, soprano*  
Debra Nagy, recorder & direction  
Julie Andrijeski & Allison Monroe, violins  
Rebecca Landell, viola da gamba  
Mark Edwards, organ  
Daniel Swenberg, theorbo & baroque guitar

## **This program is made possible with generous support from:**

*Drs. Joseph Sopko & Elizabeth Macintyre*  
**Project Sponsors**

*Dr. Daniel & Ruth Shoskes*  
**Artist Sponsor for Daniel Swenberg**

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM:

As our performances of *Noel, Noel* coincide this year with the Winter Solstice and the final days of Advent, I wanted to focus on the idea of light emerging from the darkest and shortest nights of the year. Each part of tonight's program picks up on the idea of moving from darkness to light by beginning introspectively and ending with celebratory brightness and brilliance.

A time of quiet anticipation, meditation, reflection, and promise, the symbols of Advent inspired my musical selections as well: it's my hope that listeners will be enveloped in timelessness as we feature beloved carols and hymns alongside equally-magical yet less well-known works. Classic and contemporary poems woven throughout the program enable additional opportunities to reflect on this festive season.

While my musical inspiration draws heavily from the 17th century, virtually every piece on the program hints at more ancient origins. For instance, although our original arrangement recalls the 17th century ornamented style known as division playing, both the text and tune of the famous **Coventry Carol** date to the 15th century. The modal melody and the repetition of the carol's *burden* (or refrain) have an almost mystical quality that perfectly captures the feeling of the darkest night of the year.

In addition to choosing carols and hymns that hearken back to much earlier times, the mesmerizing quality of ground bass variations are a secondary thread running through the program. The Renaissance ground bass pattern known as the Romanesca underpins **Greensleeves'** though the virtuosic divisions for violin that you'll hear tonight are drawn from John Playford's *Division Violin* (1684). Furthermore, while the tune came to be associated with Christmas and New Years from at least the 1680s, it took on new life in the 1880s as the carol *What Child is this* with the well-known refrain "On Christmas day in the morning."



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Similarly, the joyously optimistic *Drive the cold winter away*, first appeared as an Elizabethan-era broadside ballad. Fostering a spirit of generosity, hospitality, and forgiveness in the holiday season, this carol went hand-in-hand with Christmas festivities that included wassailing and feasting; the tune was even adopted for social dancing in Henry Playford's 1651 *English Dancing Master*. Another 17th century English carol, *I saw three ships* has been in the repertoire for centuries. It was still being sung in the early 20th century in North America where it was recorded as the folk ballad "As I sat on a sunny bank."

It's hard to think of two notes in alternation as a harmonic "progression" but Tarquinio Merula's *Canzonetta Spirituale La Nanna* nonetheless spins out extraordinary variations over its simple yet beguiling bass. As the harmony rocks back and forth, we can easily imagine baby Jesus in his crib being lovingly cared for by his mother. The piece is at once a gentle lullaby and a meditation on Jesus' future: just as Mary admires her tiny baby's feet and hands, she recognizes they will one day be pierced during the crucifixion. Despite the child's brutal destiny, Merula's *Canzonetta* brims with quiet joy: the closing recitative breaks free from the dream-like vision of Jesus's future to take us back to the joyful anticipation of Mary's present.

Hymn tunes from the German tradition resonate with Advent's precepts of Joy and Love. Mixing Latin with German, Michael Praetorius' harmonization of the macaronic hymn tune *In dulci jubilo* was included in the Lutheran hymnal from 1533. For this performance, I've decorated Praetorius' ebullient harmonies with virtuosic divisions for violin and recorder in 17th century style. Christian Geist's *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* takes a similar approach as a pair of violins and viola da gamba create a swirling, celebratory texture around the hymn tune in the soprano. By comparison, our arrangement of *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen* takes the accompaniment from spare to sublime ending with an ethereal descant that elevates the traditional four-voice harmony. Dietrich Buxtehude's short cantata *Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt, BuxWV 5* similarly features the instrumental ensemble who open the work with an extended sonata and respond with affirmation to virtually every phrase sung by the solo soprano. Buxtehude even takes advantage of text painting in the phrase "Der bleibet ewig unverloren" (they will remain forever unlost) as wayward chromatic harmonies depict threaten to throw the faithful off course.

Bathed in brilliant light, our final set brings us back to the English carol tradition. With its gapped scale and prominent flat-seventh in the melody, it's easy to understand why *The Wexford Carol* remains beloved in Appalachia and has long been considered a part of the traditional Irish repertoire. But The Wexford Carol has disputed origins: no single version of

the carol contains all the text but traces of it can be found in 17th and early 18th century sources including a broadside ballad "Let all that are to mirth inclined."

– Debra Nagy

## ABOUT THE POETRY

*Noel, Noel* was first premiered as a concert film in December of 2020 complete with classic and contemporary poetry narrated by legendary Cleveland broadcaster Dee Perry. Several poems were selected for inclusion from a call to Northeast Ohio poets and we're thrilled to include two of these in this weekend's concerts. Dave Lucas's *Three Kings* reframes the feast of Epiphany as a universal journey laced with faith, doubt, and inevitable change. Diane Kendig's *At the CHRISTMAS TREE on a line by Seamus Heaney* views Christmas through a lens of nostalgia, love, and remembrance.

**Diane Kendig's** five poetry collections include *Prison Terms*. She also has published a collection of Nicaraguan translations and an anthology, *In the Company of Russell Atkins*. A recipient of awards from the Ohio Arts Council, Fulbright Program, and NEH, she has written in many anthologies and journals. A proponent of public workshops, she conducts workshops in schools, neighborhood centers and, notably, a prison workshop in Lima that ran for 18 years. In 2011 she moved from Boston to her childhood home in Canton, and she now curates a weblog with over 4,000 subscribers, "Read + Write: 30 Days of Poetry" for the Cuyahoga County Public Library.

**Dave Lucas** was born and raised in Cleveland. He studied literature and poetry at John Carroll University (BA, 2002), the University of Virginia (MFA, 2004), and the University of Michigan (PhD, 2014). His first book of poems, *Weather* (VQR / Georgia, 2011), received the 2012 Ohioana Book Award for Poetry. Named by Rita Dove as one of thirteen "young poets to watch," he has also received a "Discovery/The Nation Prize and a Cleveland Arts Prize. In 2018, he was appointed the second Poet Laureate of the State of Ohio. He is a lecturer at CWRU, and teaches at the John Carroll Young Writers Workshop, the Oklahoma Arts Institute, and in the Medical Humanities program at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine.

## ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

**Les Délices** (pronounced Lay day-lease) brings long-forgotten music alive for contemporary audiences. Founded by baroque oboist Debra Nagy in 2009, Les Délices has established a reputation for unique programs that "can't help but get one listening and thinking in fresh ways" (San Francisco Classical Voice). 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). The global pandemic marked an important evolutionary period for the group: Les Délices was a leader in reconceiving concerts for the virtual space and created a web series variety show for early music called SalonEra. Critics called the concerts "sensational," and "a cultural gift" while SalonEra opened a world of music to audiences at home. Now in its 4th Season, SalonEra has premiered over 35 original episodes, and created feature opportunities for over 80 artists. Highlights of Les Délices' 2021-22 season included a new global streaming partnership with Marquee.TV, two commissioned works by composers Jonathan Woody and Sydney Guillaume, and the premiere of their



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fairytale-based chamber opera, *The White Cat*. While music of the French Baroque remains a core specialty, recent projects have seen Les Délices bring their "outstanding artistry and verve" (American Record Guide) to folksongs from Baroque-era Scotland, Classical chamber music from the Age of Revolutions, late-Medieval music, and more. Les Délices eagerly anticipates the release of two new CDs (*The Highland Lassie* and *Noel, Noel*) in November 2023 and will launch a multi-year commissioning project exploring myth and its impact on our lives in 2025.

**Julie Andrijeski, violin**, is celebrated as a performer, scholar, and teacher of historical 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). She is a faculty member at Case Western Reserve University and Teacher of Baroque Violin and Stage Movement at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She is a Visiting Lecturer at the Juilliard School and is often invited to present workshops at universities nationwide. A Grammy Award winner, Andrijeski is Artistic Director of the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra and Co-director of the New York-based ensemble Quicksilver, and performs with several other 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 17th-century music in manuscript.

**Mark Edwards, organ**, is internationally recognized for his captivating, imaginative performances. 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 given solo recitals at the Utrecht Early Music Festival and Brussels' Bozar and performed concertos with Il Gardellino (Belgium), Neobarock (Germany), and Ensemble Caprice (Canada). He is Associate Professor of Harpsichord at Oberlin Conservatory.

**Allison Monroe, violin**, has appeared with the Boston Camerata, Newberry Consort, Les Délices, Apollo's Fire, Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, and Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra, playing violin, viola, vielle, rebec, and singing. Since earning her DMA in Historical Performance Practice from Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), Allison has pursued a range of interesting projects, conceiving and performing programs and programs of English Renaissance music (*Fair and Princely Branches*, 2020), classical and early romantic violin (forthcoming), and as a founding member and co-director of Cleveland-based medieval ensemble *Trobár*. Allison has directed CWRU's Collegium Musicum and Baroque Orchestra since 2016 and joins the faculty at Mount Holyoke as Director of the Five Colleges Early Music Program in 2023.

**Amanda Powell, soprano** has been praised as "the star of the evening" (Seen and Heard International, UK) and "charismatic and theatrically arresting" (San Francisco Chronicle). A versatile musician, she is at home in repertoire spanning Baroque, Jazz, and global folk styles. Amanda has performed internationally including at the Irish National Opera House, the Aldeburgh Festival (UK), the Metropolitan Museum (New York), the National Gallery (Washington D.C.), and The State Opera Theatre in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Her 2019 debut as Messiah soloist with Calgary Symphony won

kudos as "the soloist of the night... singing to perfection." Amanda is a fluent improviser and has collaborated with such artists as Bobby McFerrin and Jamey Haddad. Amanda currently tours with the Italian band, Alla Boara (Anthony Taddeo). Amanda is on the voice faculty at Cleveland State University. She is also the Community Arts Liaison for the Cultural Arts Center at Disciples Church, Cleveland Heights.

**Cellist Rebecca Landell's** "luminous" (*Cleveland.com*) and "notable" (the *New York Times*) sound elicits a range of expression "from classically evocative to Hitchcock horrifying" (*Washingtonian*). Her solo appearances include performances with Apollo's Fire, Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, Les Delices, The Smithsonian, and Batzdorfer Hofkapelle. Rebecca will be working on a Beethoven recording at the Smithsonian this season, along with continued collaborations with Apollo's Fire and Les Delices. Rebecca's teaching career includes her faculty position at the Baroque Performance Institute and at Oberlin Conservatory teaching baroque cello and viola da gamba.

**Debra Nagy, recorder and Artistic Director,** has been deemed an artist "of consummate taste and expressivity" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*). Inspired by a creative process that brings together research, composition in historical styles, improvisation, and artistic collaboration, her recent projects have included critically-acclaimed multimedia productions of Machaut's medieval masterpiece *Remede de Fortune*, an acclaimed CD combining jazz and French Baroque airs called *Songs without Words*, and *The White Cat*, a pastiche Baroque opera for singers and chamber ensemble with puppetry and projections. Debra was recognized with a 2022 Cleveland Arts Prize (Mid-Career Artist) and received the 2022 Laurette Goldberg Prize from Early Music America for her community outreach work with Les Délices. In addition to her work with Les Délices, Debra plays principal oboe with Boston's Handel & Haydn Society, Apollo's Fire, and many other ensembles. When not rehearsing, performing, or dreaming up new projects, Debra can be found cooking up a storm in her kitchen or commuting by bike from her home in Cleveland's historic Ohio City neighborhood.

**Daniel Swenberg, plucked strings,** has performed regularly throughout North America with many leading ensembles and artists including Artek, Rebel, the Metropolitan Opera, the Carmel Bach Festival, Mr. Jones and the Engines of Destruction, Ensemble Viscera, Opera Atelier/Tafelmusik, Catacoustic Ensemble, the Four Nations Ensemble, Apollo's Fire, the Handel and Haydn Society, the Green Mountain Project, Tenet, Skid Rococo, the Newberry Consort, Lizzy & the Theorboys, Music of the Baroque, the Aspen Music Festival and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and in recital with Renée Fleming and Kathleen Battle at Carnegie Hall. He received awards from the Belgian American Educational Foundation (2000) for a study of 18th-century chamber music for the lute, and a Fulbright Scholarship (1997) to study in Bremen, Germany, at the Hochschule für Künste (studying with Stephen Stubbs and Andrew Lawrence King). He studied previously with Patrick O'Brien at Mannes College of Music, where he received a master's degree in Historical Performance (Lute). Swenberg has been a Juilliard faculty member since 2014.