



**LES  
DÉLICES**

DEBRA NAGY, DIRECTOR

**Friday, September 29 at 7:30pm**  
Lakewood Presbyterian Church  
**Saturday, September 30 at 7:30pm**  
Kulas Hall, Cleveland Institute of Music

## THE POW'R OF MUSICK

### PROGRAM

***Henry Purcell: Welcome to all the pleasures, Z339***

***Brandon Waddles: Set Me As A Seal***

***Jonathan Woody: Nigra sum sed formosa: A Fantasia on Microaggressions***

***Purcell: Three parts upon a ground, Z731***

***Purcell, arr. Sebastian Gottschick: An Evening Hymn***

**– INTERMISSION –**

***Sydney Guillaume: This, Too, Shall Pass***

***Caroline Shaw: And the swallow***

***Henry Purcell: Selections from Hail Bright Cecilia, Z328***

*Sinfonia in D major - opening from Celebrate this Festival*

*Recit & Chorus: Hail Bright Cecilia*

*Air and Chorus: Thou tuned'st this world*

*Trio: With that sublime celestial lay*

*Duo: In vain, the amorous flute*

*Excerpt from Trio Sonata no. 9 "The Golden Sonata"*

*Chorus: Soul of the World*

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#### ***Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble***

*Arianne Abela, director*

*Michele Kennedy, soprano*

*Sherezade Panthaki, soprano*

*Laura Mercado-Wright, alto*

*Michael Walker, countertenor*

*Haitham Haidar, tenor*

*Noah Horn, tenor*

*Brandon Waddles, baritone*

*Jonathan Woody, baritone*

#### ***Les Délices***

*Debra Nagy, director*

*Debra Nagy, oboe & recorder*

*Gaia Saetermoe-Howard, oboe & recorder*

*Shelby Yamin, violin*

*Caitlin Hedges, violin*

*Jonathan Goya, viola and violin*

*Rebecca Landell Reed, cello*

*Sue Yelanjian, violone*

*Mark Edwards, organ*

## *Notes on the Program*

Birthdays and anniversaries are significant; they offer moments to reflect, to give thanks, and (perhaps) to dream. To celebrate Les Délices' 15th Anniversary, I wanted to create a concert program that felt at once familiar and extremely ambitious. I wanted to bring treasured colleagues together to take on new challenges. I wanted to offer Les Délices' artistic collaborators a program that highlights their versatility while rewarding our loyal audience with a life-changing experience. I wanted to celebrate the power of music in our lives.

As a practitioner of historical performance, I am deeply committed to the idea that music has the power to move us - to quicken our pulse with the rush of an ascending scale, to transport us with a soaring melody, to embody our pain or anguish in a moment of chromaticism. As an interpreter, I feel alive to the idea that every melodic interval, harmony, and phrase of every piece contains a powerful coded message for individual listeners to understand intuitively.

Music is doubly powerful when we experience it in community. Whether one is standing shoulder to shoulder with raised voices in a choir, feeling the sympathetic vibrations of their instrument blending with a nearby player in an orchestra, or experiencing the divine tension and release of dissonance resolving to a cadence from a seat in the audience, music transports, calms, and exalts us.

Tonight's program *The Pow'r of Musick* aims to take you on an artistic and spiritual journey. While our program juxtaposes seemingly disparate repertoires – the music of English Baroque composer Henry Purcell frames contemporary works by Jonathan Woody, Brandon Waddles, Caroline Shaw, and Sydney Guillaume – the through-line in the program is the representation of music as something powerful, meaningful, and bigger than ourselves.

Our program begins with Henry Purcell's ode for vocal soloists, chorus, and chamber orchestra, ***Welcome to all the pleasures, Z339***. Considered the patron saint of music and musicians, St. Cecilia was identified in legend and iconography with the organ (a symbol of divine order and universal harmony) and her singing was said to unite the celestial (the music of the spheres and the songs of angels) with the terrestrial. As a result, odes to St. Cecilia (including *Welcome to all the Pleasures* and *Hail, Bright Cecilia*) contain myriad references to both science and mysticism.

Purcell's odes for St. Cecilia are ingenious in every way: there are daring, expressive harmonies, beguiling vocal solos, and delightful obbligatos for instrumentalists. But it's clearly in service to something bigger: the works are full of references to the Music of the Spheres (or planets) and Celestial Harmony. A master of musical word painting, Purcell brings special attention to phrases such as the "Ark of universal harmony"; he effectively uses a ground bass to mesmerize listeners in the alto solo "Here the Deities approve"; and the final chorus recognizes the communal act of music-making both literally and figuratively as Purcell sets the text, "In a consort of voices while instruments play, we celebrate..."

We can derive joy, take strength, find solidarity, and even feel radical empathy through the shared experience of music. The selections by living American composers on tonight's program emphasize music's power to help us see the world from other people's perspectives and be enriched through the experience of compassion.

**Brandon Waddles's *Set Me As A Seal*** sets the text from Song of Solomon 8:6 in a simple yet beautiful way that reinforces its message of forthrightness, dedication, commitment, and love. Waddles even draws upon similar musical rhetoric to Purcell using triple meter to portray lightness and sweetness before the harmonies turn dark as love is contrasted with "death." Flowing eighth notes and imitation between the voices embody the water imagery of "floods," while the final, nearly whispered, repetitions of "For love is as strong as (death)" emphasize perseverance.

**Jonathan Woody's** searing "***Nigra sum sed formosa: A Fantasia on Microaggressions***" sets a different text from the Song of Solomon but interweaves the traditional chant melody "I am black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem" (Song of Solomon 1:5) with racially-charged comments from audience members submitted by Black musicians. Jonathan describes the work:

*In composing the piece, I was deeply inspired by other settings of the "Nigra sum" text, which comes from the Song of Solomon and describes a beautiful black-skinned peasant who finds favor in the court and is beloved for her beauty. It was written in a 17th century style; a fantasia on a text describing racial and other microaggressions experienced by artists of color in the field of classical music. I worked with [countertenor] Reginald Mobley to take stories of some of the more disappointing and jarring moments in the lives of classical musicians of color, and turn them into a piece of music that shows the juxtaposition of the beauty of the music of the baroque era against the ugliness of racism and how it plays out in our modern lives...I believe it tells a story of both lamentation and liberation; the lamentation of the unjust world we have all inherited, the liberation of speaking and singing our truth out loud, and also the liberation of finding the beauty and humanity of ourselves as artists, no matter our race or background.*

**Sydney Guillaume's *This, Too, Shall Pass*** (text by Lloyd Reshard, Jr.) calmly acknowledges universal challenges while reminding us to make the most of the present moment. The opening strains of "This too shall pass" resemble a hymn and the text's first utterance is heard as a quiet prayer. Yet as the work proceeds and "time goes on," Sydney uses repetition and syncopation to build hope, gather energy, and increase confidence. By the end, not only are we uplifted by the text "life will prevail," and inspired by the call to action, "we will strive," but we hear the ultimate message of collective kindness that urges us to embrace each moment and each other.

**Pulitzer-prize winning composer Caroline Shaw's rapturous *And the swallow*** (based on Psalm 84) responds to the Syrian refugee crisis. Shaw described the message of the work as, "There's a yearning for a home that feels very relevant today. The second verse is: "The

sparrow found a house and the swallow a nest, where she may place her young," which is just a beautiful image of a bird trying to keep her children safe—people to keep their family safe."

Between the contemporary works on tonight's program, we hear **Henry Purcell's** brilliant ***Three Parts upon a Ground*** and ***An Evening Hymn*** in a new arrangement with strings and chorus by Sebastian Gottschick. While Purcell's *Three Parts* uses a repeating bass pattern that's strikingly similar to the famous Pachelbel Canon, Purcell's treatment is full of surprise and ingenuity. Dubbed a "fantasia" rather than a chaconne (or some other more generic title), Purcell's music constantly plays with different styles - from traditional French dotted rhythms to rapid-fire divisions to canonic writing in two, three, and four parts. *An Evening Hymn*, by contrast, is calm and assured despite the fact that the vocal melody does not comply with the regular phrase structure of the ostinato bass. Purcell's Evening Hymn appeared as the first piece in Henry Playford's 1693 collection *Harmonia Sacra*, a publication not designed for the church but rather for personal expression. Though the final Hallelujah is made more celebratory in this performance by inclusion of strings and chorus, the ongoing tension between the voice and the ground bass ensures that we'll stay up all night, *the pow'r of musick* coursing through our minds.

We close our program with selections from **Hail Bright Cecilia, Z328**, composed just before Purcell's death in 1692. We've fashioned our own suite for this performance that's suited to our instrumental forces. The text by Nicholas Brady makes explicit references to Cecilia's "celestial art," and to the harmony of the spheres, posing the rhetorical question, "can any earthly sounds compare?" While the sweet, earthy sounds of two oboes in parallel thirds and sixths support the text, "Thou tuned'st this world," the only instrument that may come close to celestial sounds is "the noble organ," whose pipes are given voice by "angel's breath," as we hear in the trio "With that sublime celestial lay" for alto, tenor, and bass. Another limpid ground bass provides the foundation for a pair of gently sighing recorders in the alto-tenor duo "In vain the amorous flute," in which the solo voices engage in an ecstatic dance reminiscent of the Song of Solomon's divine love as they weave in and around one another. Finally, the word painting in the chorus "The Soul of the World," takes us from mysticism to contemporary (seventeenth-century) science as the quivering, nervous energy of electrons and "scatter'd atoms" finally bind and align "in perfect harmony."

– Debra Nagy