

LES DÉLICES WINDS OF CHANGE

Virtuoso flutist Emi Ferguson joins Les Délices for a program of riveting chamber works from the eve of the French and Haitian Revolutions.

Inspired by philosophical ideals of liberty and equality and early abolitionist writing, we pair works by Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de St. Georges and Luigi Boccherini with *A Journey to Freedom*, a new work by Haitian composer Sydney Guillaume recently commissioned by Les Délices.

Emi Ferguson	Flute
Debra Nagy	Oboe
Shelby Yamin	Violin
Allison Monroe	Viola
Rebecca Reed	Cello

4.00pm
Sunday February 5, 2023
Corpus Christi Church,
529 W. 121st Street

4.00pm
Sunday February 12, 2023
Online

Concert generously sponsored by Deborah Malamud.

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Please turn off cell phones. Photography and recording are not permitted.

Music Before 1800 requires everyone who comes to any of our concerts to remain masked while indoors.

WINDS OF CHANGE

**Joseph Bologne,
Chevalier de St Georges**
(1745 – 1799)
arr. Nagy

Quartet for flute and strings
(after *Sonata for flute and harp in Eb*)
I. Andante
II. Menuetto
III. Rondeau

Sydney Guillaume
(b. 1982)

A Journey to Freedom*
*Les Délices commission

**Joseph Bologne,
Chevalier de St Georges**
(1745 – 1799)
arr. Nagy

Quartet for oboe and strings
(after *String Quartet Op. 1, no.3, and Quartetto concertant no.2*)
I. Allegro assai
II. Adagio
I. Rondeau

Luigi Boccherini
(1743 – 1805)

**Quintet for flute, oboe, violin, viola,
and cello in C major, G44**
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Allegretto
III. Tempo di Minuetto

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INFORMATION
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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

"It seems to me that one man alone could govern the world, if all hearts were disposed to tolerance and equity."

– Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante* (2440), published in 1771.

The Age of Revolutions may be past, but ongoing fights for racial justice in the U.S. and around the world, systemic oppression, continued challenges to freedom of movement and expression, and recent political unrest in Haiti all make clear that the journey to freedom is something that we are still living through and must continue to work towards. While *Winds of Change* takes inspiration from the philosophies that sparked the French and Haitian revolutions at the end of the 18th century, we also hope that it affords an opportunity to reflect on how we can individually and collectively respond to injustice and inequity today.

Our program features instrumental chamber music from the revolutionary period that – while working within traditional forms – challenged societal norms in subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle ways. For instance, Joseph Bologne's playful, tune-filled music belies the racism that he faced forging a path as a Black performer and composer in late 18th C. France. The mixed-race son of a Black enslaved woman known as Nanon and a white plantation owner in Guadeloupe, Bologne became a member of France's abolitionist group Les Amis des Noirs and traveled to Haiti in the mid-1790s.

"It is only by your avarice and our ignorance that anyone is still held in slavery up to this day, and we can neither see nor find the right that you pretend to have over us...We are your equals then, by natural right, and if nature pleases itself to diversify colors within the human race, it is not a crime to be born Black nor an advantage to be white."

– Toussaint L'Ouverture,
Letter to the General Assembly July 1792

Too often, our visions of the past have excluded composers and performers of color. For this program, we bring new works by a historical Black composer into the chamber music repertoire by creating historically-inspired arrangements. We've reimaged Bologne's sonata for harp and flute as a quartet for flute and strings and drawn from the composer's published string quartets to create a new quartet for oboe and strings.

At the center of our program, we are extremely pleased to present Sydney Guillaume's *A Journey to Freedom*. Reflecting on over 200 years of struggle for freedom from oppression, Sydney's commission for Les Délices represents a journey that's at once personal and universal.

LES DÉLICES

In this work, initial neoclassical tendencies are transformed by traditional yanvalou rhythms from Sydney's native Haiti, creating a work that soars, pleads, and is ultimately left unresolved.

"Do you want the state to be solid? Then make the wealth-spread as small as you can; don't allow rich men or beggars. It is always between them that public liberty is put on sale."

– Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract* (1762)

While the Italian cellist Luigi Boccherini cannot be said to have played a part in the French or Haitian revolutions, his music—which was certainly heard in Paris during this time—reflects his original thinking and unique values. To listen to Boccherini is to inhabit an alternative musical universe that privileges repetition over development, that revels in moments of harmonic friction, and that explores new ways to be expressive within an intimate, almost-whispered palette of soft dynamics. Boccherini's obsession with colors and textures (rather than melody and form) reflect not only his distinctive priorities but also seem to reject the aesthetic values or "progress" of his contemporaries Haydn and Mozart.

Boccherini's idiosyncratic style is clearly identifiable even when unattributed – which is the case for the Quintet in C major. The first movement delights in contrasts and soars with bits of birdsong while the meditative last movement explores a kaleidoscope of pastel colors. With dynamics rarely rising above piano, Boccherini redefines virtuosity across twelve successive variations that are built on the simplest of structures: a simple C major scale going up and down. Deceptively simple but utterly sublime, the 19th century violinist Jean-Baptiste Cartier commented, "If God wanted to speak to men through music, he would do it with the works of Haydn, but if He himself wished to listen to music, He would choose Boccherini."

– Debra Nagy

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 its reputation for 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 ensemble's debut CD was named one of the "Top Ten Early Music Discoveries of 2009" (*NPR's Harmonia*), and the group's performances have been called "astonishing" (*ClevelandClassical.com*), and "first class" (*Early Music America Magazine*).

Touring highlights for Les Délices include performances with Music Before 1800, Da Camera Society (Los Angeles), Houston Early Music Society, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston), San Francisco Early Music Society, the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments, and Columbia University's Miller Theatre.

Les Délices also presents its own annual four-concert series in Cleveland, Lakewood, and at Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights, OH, where the group is Artist in Residence.

Emi Ferguson can be heard live in concerts and festivals with groups including the Handel and Haydn Society, AMOC*, the New York New Music Ensemble, and the Manhattan Chamber Players. Emi's recordings for Arezzo Music, *Fly the Coop: Bach Sonatas and Preludes with Ruckus* (2019) and *Amour Cruel* (2017) were amongst the top ten albums on the Classical and World Music Billboard Charts and showcase Emi's fascination with reinvigorating music and instruments of the past for the present. Born in Japan and raised in London and Boston, she now resides in New York City.

A multi-instrumentalist, **Allison Monroe** 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, Allison particularly enjoys creating her own musical opportunities: as Artistic Director and performer for Fair and Princely Branches; as violinist and violist on an album of classical and early romantic duos; and as a founding member and co-director of Cleveland-based medieval ensemble Trobár. Allison also directs CWRU's Collegium Musicum and Baroque Orchestra.

MUSIC BEFORE 1800

"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. 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. She also indulges her love of late-medieval music as a regular collaborator with Boston's Blue Heron. Inspired by a creative process that brings together research, composition in historical styles, improvisation, and artistic collaboration, highlights of Debra's recent projects include a critically-acclaimed multimedia production of Machaut's medieval masterpiece *Remede de Fortune* and a Baroque-Jazz crossover program called *Songs without Words*, and *The White Cat*, a pastiche Baroque opera for singers and chamber ensemble with puppetry and projections based on the Countess D'Aulnoy's 1690s feminist fairytale. In the pandemic, Debra reimagined Les Délices' concert series for the virtual space and created a webseries variety show for early music called SalonEra.

Cellist **Rebecca Landell Reed'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, Three Notch'd Road, and Batzdorfer Hofkapelle. Rebecca pursues a diverse professional career, such as performing and acting in Studio Theatre's *An Iliad*, working with composer Eric Shimelonis on NPR children's show *Circle Round*, and developing educational programs with the Crumhorn Collective. She is currently on faculty at Oberlin Conservatory, where she teaches baroque cello and viola da gamba.

A native New Yorker, violinist **Shelby Yamin** has earned distinction for her sparkling, vivacious performances. Equally adept as a modern and period violinist, Shelby was the winner of the Juilliard415 concerto competition, and has been featured as a soloist with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Francisco Academy Orchestra, the Tafelmusik Winter Institute, and the Oregon Bach Festival Berwick Academy, where she returned as guest concertmaster in 2019. Shelby was the first prize winner of the Berkeley Piano Club's Barbara Fritz Chamber Music Competition and the first prize winner of the Virtuoso e Bel Canto competition in Lucca, Italy, where she was a recipient of the Luigi Boccherini Award.

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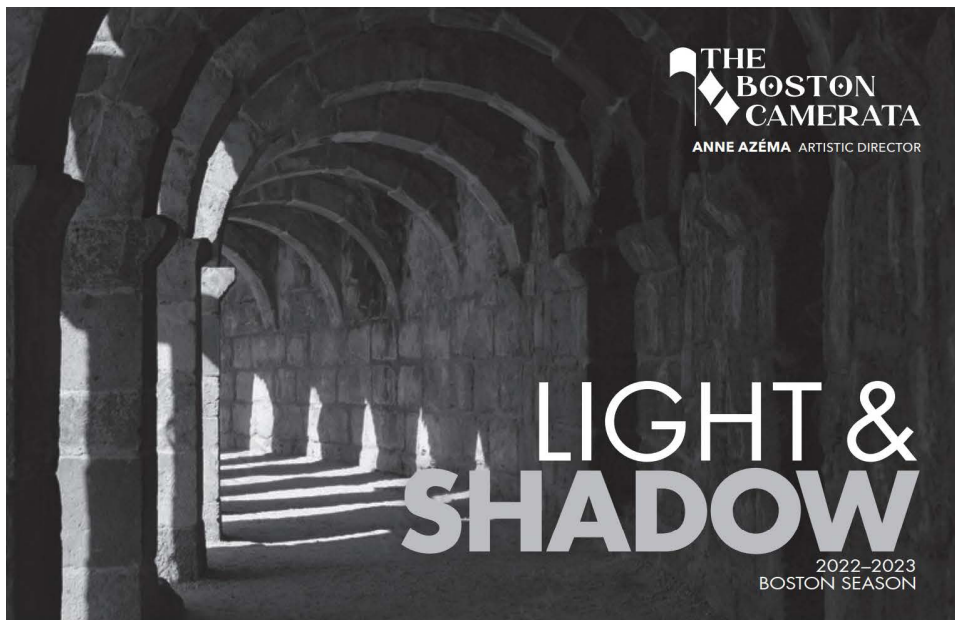
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More information can be found at **MB1800.org**