

Lés Delices and Quire Cleveland: “Let the Heavens Rejoice!” (Apr. 28)

by Mike Telin



A long-overdue collaboration between two of the area’s eminent chamber ensembles yielded divine results when Les Délices and Quire Cleveland came together on Saturday, April 28 at Lakewood Congregational Church for “Let the Heavens Rejoice!” The program showcased celebratory

French Baroque psalms for 22 voices, 14 instruments, and a quartet of vocal soloists, all under the direction of guest conductor Scott Metcalfe.

Violinist Julie Andrijeski led a spirited performance of five movements from Jacques Aubert’s winsome *Concert de Symphonies*. The wind band of bassoonist Anna Marsh and oboists Debra Nagy and Kathryn Montoya was delightful in the second minuet. Metcalfe, here on violin, joined Andrijeski and cellist Jaap ter Linden for a lively second gigue, while flutist Kathie Stewart brought elegance to the Sarabande.

Tenor Philippe Gagné, who had flown in that day from Montreal to replace the ailing Owen McIntosh, sang with a clear, focused tone during the opening recitative of Rameau’s Grand Motet *In convertendo*. Metcalfe drew a blended, well-balanced sound from the chorus in “Tunc repletum est gaudio.” Soprano Elena Mullins and baritone Jeffrey Strauss sounded splendid in their duet, “Magnificavit Dominus,” while soprano Sarah Coffman sang with a crystalline tone in her solos with the chorus during “Laudate nomen Dei.” Metcalfe shaped the concluding chorus “Euntes ibant et flebant” wonderfully and the choir sang with noble conviction.

Following the instrumental ensemble's impressive performance of the Chaconne from Aubert's *Concert de Symphonies*, the members of Quire Cleveland moved to both sides of the balcony for Charpentier's *Salve Regina*. The singers sounded superb under the direction of their artistic director Ross Duffin, their full-bodied tone ringing out in the venue's pleasing acoustic as they sang, 'Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy.' The final chord was magical.

The second Grand Motet came in the guise of Jean-Joseph Cassanea de Mondinville's *Venite exultemus*. Again, the vocalists and instrumentalists were in fine form. Standout sections included Strauss' delivery of the "Quoniam ipse est mare," and flutists Kathie Stewart's and Sarah Lynn's duet during the "Venite adoremus," brilliantly sung by Mullins. Gagné was smashing during "Sicut in Exacerbatione" and "Quadragesima," and Coffman and Mullins were spectacular in the concluding chorus, "Gloria patri."

Organist Mark Edwards and his continuo colleagues Jaap ter Linden and bassist Tracy Mortimore provided stylish support throughout.

It's nice to know that future collaborations between Les Délices and Quire Cleveland are already scheduled. The ensembles will perform Charpentier's *Midnight Mass for Christmas* in December.

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