

**Sneak Preview: Les Délices'
Song of Orpheus (debut Oct. 7)**

by Daniel Hathaway



Les Délices has allowed us an advance look at the first full video program of its new season, *Song of Orpheus*, which will debut [online](#) Thursday, October 7 and remain available on demand through November 6.

The Orpheus myth inspired French Baroque composers Jean-Philippe Rameau and Philippe Courbois to write expressive solo cantatas about the famous Greek musician-poet and his futile attempts — because of his own impatience — to rescue his beloved Eurydice from the grasp of Pluto in the Underworld. These are beautifully performed by the clear-voiced soprano Hannah De Priest and the velvet-throated baritone Jonathan Woody (who makes a walk-on appearance in the Rameau).



The superb instrumental ensemble — Shelby Yamin, violin, Debra Nagy, oboe, Rebecca Reed, gamba and cello, and Mark Edwards, harpsichord — provide color and drama. Edwards contributes a solo harpsichord entr'acte, Jean-François Dandrieu's *La lyre d'Orphée* (played from memory) in imitation of the poet's magical music, which could bend mountaintops and trees.

The program is introduced by a new trio sonata commissioned by Les Délices from Jonathan Woody, who has drunk so deeply at the fountain of Apollo that he's able to write a 21st century work that could plausibly have come from the pen of a 17th-century master — but with some expressive storytelling devices of his own that both belong to the genre and extend it in new directions. *By Much Love Betray'd* is an impressive achievement that should find a place on programs of other period instrument groups.

The videography and production values of this episode reach new heights and validate Les Délices COVID-era decision to reinvent itself as a production company that will still present live concerts from time to time.

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