

## Les Délices explores music of the 14th Century Avant-garde



“My heart always comes back to Medieval music — it’s just so beautiful,” Les Délices artistic director Debra Nagy said during a telephone conversation. “This wonderful program is full of my favorite pieces from that repertoire.”

On Friday, November 22 at 7:30 pm at First Congregational Church in Hudson, Les Délices will present “14th Century Avant-garde.” The

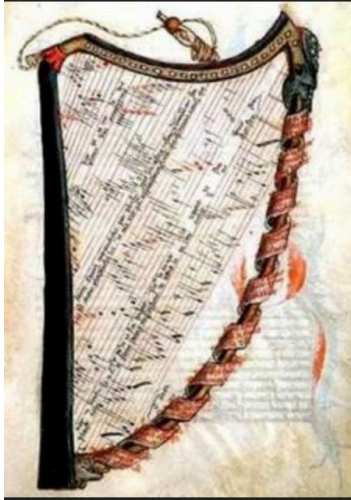
evening features music by Guillaume de Machaut, Jacob Senleches, and Johannes Suzoy performed by mezzo-soprano Sophie Michaux, tenor James Reese, Scott Metcalfe (vielle & gothic harp), and Debra Nagy (recorders, douçaines, harp, and voice).

The program will be repeated on Saturday, November 23 at 7:30pm at Inlet Dance Theater in Cleveland and Sunday, November 24 at 4:00pm at Disciples Christian Church in Cleveland Heights. Tickets are available [online](#).

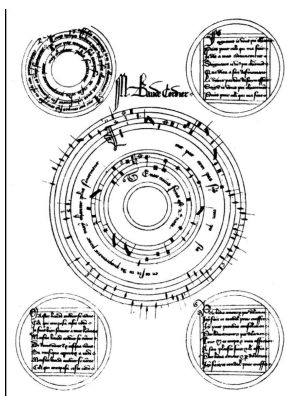
Although many people know the name Guillaume de Machaut, Nagy said that there are a number of great composers from that period who are not household names. And when you ask them to describe Medieval music, most think of Gregorian chant.

“This is some of the most sophisticated and beautiful music you could possibly hear prior to the 20th century. There’s a surprising rhythmic complexity and an interesting use of dissonance. It also has a sensual quality that I think is really surprising.” She added that the first set of the program, Song as Object, is particularly fascinating.

“Machaut’s *Ma fin est mon commencement* (my end is my beginning) is a palindrome with two notated voices and a third voice is derived by reading the first voice backwards. So it’s like a double palindrome.”



Nagy said that in the case of Senleches' *La harpe de melodie*, the manuscript is in the shape of a harp and the harp strings double as staff lines while the shapes of notes and different colored inks are instructions regarding rhythm.



Another piece of “eye-music” is Baude Cordier's *Tout par compas*. “The manuscript is in a circle. The two canonic voices are chasing each other around in a circle and the text talks about being in a circle. It's musically delightful with a lot of mixed meters. And that's just the first set.”

Nagy said that the most unusual piece is in the fourth set, Triumph of Reason – Music and Mathematics. “While the text of Johannes Suzoy's *Pictagoras* is about ancient musicians, the music is extremely complex with each voice notated in different, frequently-changing meters. It's a gorgeous piece that is so sensual, yet intellectual in conception.”

The program's other sets explore the subject of Perfection in Nature, Courtly Love, and Carnal Pleasure (The Birds and the Bees).

Nagy looks forward to working with her collaborators Scott Metcalfe, Sophie Michaux, and James Reese. “I always enjoy working with Scott, he's an amazing musician. Sophie is extraordinarily versatile in everything from the High Baroque to Medieval music and being a native French speaker she's wonderful with this repertoire. I'm excited to have James with us. He's a great story teller and has a wonderful high tenor voice.”

The Saturday performance will include a pre-concert reception beginning at 7:00 pm. On Sunday, a pre-concert talk begins at 3:15 pm. Both performances will feature projected supertitles.

“This program is a great opportunity for people to experience something very different and surprisingly beautiful.”

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