



GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
Remede de Fortune / A Remedy for Fortune

8:00 p.m. • Friday, March 17, 2017
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

GUILLAUME de MACHAUT

Remede de Fortune / A Remedy for Fortune

I. Prologue, or How to love well

Ballade: Esperance qui m'asseure

II. In the Court of Love

Lai: Qui n'aroit autre deport (RF1)

Motet: Hareu, hareu! / Helas! ou sera pris confors / Obediens usque ad mortem

III. Love slays the Lover

Ballade: Gais et jolis (instrumental)

Complainte: Tieus rit au main qui su soir pleure (RF2)

IV. Lady Hope comes to the Lover's aid

Chant royal: Joye, plaisance, et douce nourreture (RF3)

Motet: Qui es promesses de Fortune / Ha Fortune / Et non est qui adjuvet

Baladelle: En amer a douce vie (RF4)

INTERMISSION

V. Wrestling with Doubt

Bird song (instrumental): Or sus, vous dormes trop (anon., excerpt arr. Nagy)

Ballade: Dame de qui toute ma joie vient (RF5)

Motet: Trop plus est bele que biauté / Biauté parée de valour / Je ne sui mie certains

VI. Dancing en plein air

Instrumental: Dis tans plus (Jehan Lescurel, arr. Nagy)

Virelai: Dis tans plus (Lescurel)

Virelai: Dame, a vous sans retollir (RF6)

VII. Reunited with his Lady

Messe de Nostre Dame: Kyrie I

Estampies based on Machaut tunes (arr. Nagy)

Rondelet: Dame, mon cuer en vous remainit (RF7)

VIII. She loves me, she loves me not

Ballade: Biauté qui toutes autres pere

Motet: Trop plus est bele que biauté / Biauté parée de valour / Je ne sui mie certains

All works by Guillaume de Machaut (c.1300-1377) unless otherwise noted.

RF1-7 are songs from the Remede itself.

Translations of all texts will be projected as supertitles.

Complete texts & translations are available on our website: www.blueheron.org.

Pre-concert talk by Matilda Bruckner (Boston College, retired)

sponsored in part by The Cambridge Society for Early Music



Blue Heron
Scott Metcalfe, director

Martin Near
countertenor, percussion

Debra Nagy
recorders, douçaine & harp

Les Délices
Debra Nagy, director

Owen McIntosh
tenor, percussion

Charles Weaver
lute, voice & hurdy-gurdy



Projections designed
by Shawn Keener

Jason McStoots
tenor, narrator

Scott Metcalfe
fiddle & harp



Blue Heron is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. The Lexington performance is supported in part by a grant from the Lexington Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

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GUILLAUME de MACHAUT

Remede de Fortune / A Remedy for Fortune

Guillaume de Machaut first enters the historical record in a few ecclesiastical documents from 1330-33 in which he is described variously as a clerk, almoner, notary, and secretary to the king of Bohemia, Jean of Luxembourg. Machaut probably worked as Jean's secretary, travelling all over Europe, until the king's heroic if foolhardy death at the battle of Crécy on August 26, 1346. (He insisted on being led into battle, although he was by then completely blind.) After Crécy, Machaut seems to have served a number of other eminent nobles, a confusing number of whom are named either Jean or Charles: his patrons included the king of Bohemia's daughter, Bonne of Luxembourg; her husband Jean, duke of Normandy, who became King Jean II of France; their son Charles, the future King Charles V; Charles's brothers, Jean, duke of Berry, and Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy; Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus; King Charles of Navarre, and others. Machaut lived through the Black

Death, which peaked in France in the years 1348-50, killing 30-60% of the European population, including about half of Paris's 100,000 inhabitants. By 1360 or so Machaut seems to have taken up residence in Reims, where he had held a benefice at the Cathedral since 1338. (A benefice was an ecclesiastical appointment offering a salary without requirement of service in return: a literal sinecure, *sine cura* or free of pastoral duties.) He died sometime before November 9, 1377, when his position at the Cathedral of Reims passed to another.

While Machaut's life is sparsely documented, his works are richly transmitted in a unique series of six "complete works" manuscripts produced between c. 1350 and 1390, mostly under the author's supervision, several abundantly illuminated. The manuscripts contain more than fifteen long narrative poems or *dits*; a collection of lyric poetry known as the *Loange des dames* or *Praise of Ladies*, consisting of some 280 poems not

set to music; and a music section which eventually comprised 19 *lais*, 23 motets, a setting of the Mass, a *hocket*, 42 ballades, 22 *rondeaux*, and 33 *virelais*. The order in which all this was to appear was carefully specified by the composer, as a manuscript compiled at the very end of his life tells us: "Vesci l'ordenance que G. de Machau vuet qu'il ait en son livre": "This is the order which G. de Machaut wishes to have in his book."

Bonne of Luxembourg & the *Remede de Fortune*

Of all his patrons, the one who seems to have attracted Machaut's warmest personal devotion was Bonne of Luxembourg. Born May 20, 1315, she died at age 34 on September 11, 1349, perhaps of the Black Death, the mother of ten. Machaut may have undertaken the compilation of his first

complete works manuscript for Bonne, in the late 1340s (the so-called MS C), but she died before it was finished and it was completed either for her widower Jean or for their son Charles. The lavishly illustrated book concludes with the motet *Trop plus est bele que Biauté*, perhaps intended as a memorial benediction for Bonne, "Far more beautiful than Beauty itself..., better than Goodness, and full of everything, in truth, that a good and beautiful lady should have." The *Remede de Fortune*, too, appears to be dedicated to Bonne: the text identifies her more or less explicitly as the perfect lady of the tale, to whom everyone rightly gives the name *bonne*.

The *Remede* is a *dit* or narrative poem of over 4000 octosyllabic lines, telling the story of a young and inexperienced lover and his attempt to learn how to be happy, to live and love well, despite the reversals dished

... tousdis enclinoie
Mon cuer et toute ma pensee
Vers ma dame qui est clamee
De tous sur toutes belle et bonne:
Chascun par droit ce nom li donne.

... my heart and all my thoughts
were ever inclined towards
my lady, who is proclaimed
by all beautiful and good above all:
everyone rightly gives her this name.

— *Remede de Fortune*, 52-6

out by Fortune and her wheel. Interspersed into the highly didactic story are seven lyric poems, set to music, which present a catalogue of exemplary forms arranged from old to new, from the traditional, virtuoso *lai*, a comically extended *complainte*, and *chanson royal*—forms inherited from the previous century—to the newer forms of the so-called *seconde rhétorique*, the *ballade* and related *baladelle*, the *virelai*, and the *rondeau* (here labelled *rondelet*). The explicit goal of the *Remede* is to instruct its readers, by means of example and plain teaching, in how to live ethically in a world which is not designed to assure human happiness. Lady Hope teaches the lover to trust in hope, cultivate indifference to the vagaries of Fortune—whether you are in her favor for the moment or not—and do not desire, but accept the good things Love has given you without wishing vainly for things which are impossible. These ideas are summarized in the ballade with which we open our concert, *Esperance qui m’asseure*, and their essential kernel is perfectly expressed in the tenor of the motet *Trop plus est bele*, with which we conclude: “I am not certain of having a lover, but I am a loyal friend.”

Our Remede

Our concert version of the *Remede*, created by Debra Nagy and myself, includes all of the lyrics and music from the poem, although we have excerpted the *Lai* and *Complainte*. (Performed complete, they would last approximately fifteen and forty-five minutes, respectively.) We have replaced most of the narration with songs and motets by Machaut that explore the same themes. What remains, describing the essence of the action, has been translated into English prose to be spoken. The supertitles provide slightly condensed translations of the sung lyrics; the complete French texts and translations may be found on Blue Heron’s website, www.blueheron.org.

For the projections, Shawn Keener has drawn on illustrations from the Machaut manuscripts, especially those found in MS C, which were created by a small team of highly skilled and esteemed artists.

—Scott Metcalfe

The Story

The *Remede de Fortune* is an interesting (and funny) story for a few reasons. While it traffics in common themes from the medieval world of Courtly Love (including the central allegorical figures of Hope and Fortune and unrequited pining for the beloved), there’s also some fascinating gender-role reversal. For instance, it’s the women here who are wise, deft, and strong: Hope is all-knowing and comforting, Fortune is powerful and virtually untouchable, and the Lady is a slightly manipulative power-broker who’s well aware of her position and her ability to extract favors and to grant or withhold happiness. The Lover, on the other hand, is practically a hysterical caricature: a whimpering, self-indulgent sot who is reduced to quivering and puddles of tears at the slightest glance from his Lady.

Synopsis

Our story begins with the Lover (our narrator) attempting to enumerate all he has learned through trial and experience. He is easily distracted and veers off course, however, and doesn’t appear to list all

the “twelve things” he has promised to reveal. Instead, he begins to tell us about how he first came to fall in love. He was young, innocent, and foolish. His Lady, meanwhile, was perfection—his model in all things. Naturally, he kept his feelings deeply hidden but learned to express both his despair and exaltation through poetry and song.

One day, his Lady asks him to recite a *lai* (a long and complex lyric poem) for her enjoyment. When she asks him who wrote it, he is scared stiff. Should he tell her the truth and risk rejection and humiliation? Conversely, how could he possibly lie to the woman he loves? He does neither: bewildered and flabbergasted, fearing that he will drop dead on the spot if the Lady expresses the slightest disfavor towards him (!), he runs off without saying a word.

Overwhelmed by cowardice and intimidated by the strength of his own feelings, he wanders until he comes upon a secluded spot in a pleasure garden called the Park of Hesdin. First he cries himself sick—lashing out at himself, Love, and Fortune—in a 36-stanza *Complainte* that would easily take 45 minutes to perform.

(We have excerpted it for this performance.) Having convinced himself that he is near death, he opens one eye to find a beautiful woman sitting next to him. She is there to comfort him, instruct him about Love, and counsel him to adjust his attitude about Fortune. She barely seems real; at length she introduces herself as *Esperance*—Hope. Pledging her companionship through doubts and difficult times, she gives the Lover her ring. His health restored, emboldened by Hope, the Lover goes off in search of his Lady—though he quickly loses faith, causing Hope to reappear.

Approaching his Lady's castle, the Lover comes upon a group dancing in a garden and spots his Lady among them. The dancers each take a turn singing and the Lover stumbles forward to join them. The Lady notices the Lover and insists that he take his turn to sing for the dance. The dancing winds up and the company departs.

Back at the castle, the Lady pointedly asks the Lover where he has been and confronts him about running off. He confesses all to her and she grants him the gift of her love. They go together to hear Mass after which a trumpet sounds, announcing dinner. The

entire company then enjoys a great feast followed by music and dancing. Before the Lover takes his leave, he and his Lady exchange rings as a token of their alliance. The Lover departs, singing a rondelet (*Dame, mon cuer en vous remaint*) as he goes.

After spending the afternoon in a field enjoying jousting and other diversions, the Lover can't wait to get back to his Lady. But when he finds her, she appears to ignore him. Stricken with grief and doubt, he asks whether she has decided to abandon him; she reassures him that she is merely acting to conceal their love, for true love ought not to be revealed to a slanderous, perverse, and inconstant society such as the world has presently become. Although assailed by fear and torments of all kinds, he determines to believe and trust her. The poem ends with a prayer of homage to Love, in which Machaut signs his name in an anagram.

—Debra Nagy

About the Artists



Blue Heron has been acclaimed by *The Boston Globe* as “one of the Boston music community’s indispensables” and hailed by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker* for its “expressive intensity.” Committed to vivid live performance informed and enhanced by the study of original source materials and historical performance practices, Blue Heron ranges over a wide repertoire, from plainchant to new music, with particular specialities in 15th-century Franco-Flemish and early 16th-century English polyphony. Blue Heron’s first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in 2007. In 2010 the ensemble inaugurated a 5-CD series of *Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks*, including many world premiere recordings of works copied c. 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral; the fifth disc was released in March 2017. Blue Heron’s recordings also include a CD of plainchant and polyphony to accompany Thomas Forrest Kelly’s book *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation* and the live recording *Christmas in Medieval England*. Jessie Ann Owens (UC Davis) and Blue Heron won the 2015 Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society to support a world premiere recording of Cipriano de Rore’s first book of madrigals (1542), to be begun next season.

Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents a concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival; in New York City at Music Before 1800, The Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the 92nd Street Y; at the Library of Congress and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.; at the Berkeley Early Music Festival; and in San Luis Obispo, Seattle, St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. This season’s highlights include a debut at the National Gallery of Art in a program designed to accompany the exhibition “Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence.” Blue Heron has been in residence at the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University and at Boston College. In 2015 the ensemble embarked on a long-term project to perform the complete works of Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497). Entitled *Ockeghem@600*, it will wind up in 2020-21, in time to commemorate the composer’s circa-600th birthday.

Les Délices explores the dramatic potential and emotional resonance of long-forgotten music. Founded by baroque oboist Debra Nagy in 2009, Les Délices has established a reputation for unique programs that are, according to *The New York Times*, “thematically concise, richly expressive, and featuring composers few people have heard of... 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” by NPR’s Harmonia, and the

group's performances have been called "a beguiling experience" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*), "astonishing" (*ClevelandClassical.com*), and "first class" (*Early Music America Magazine*). Since Les Délices' sold-out New York debut at the Frick Collection, touring highlights have included New York's Music Before 1800, Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the San Francisco Early Music Society, the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments, and Columbia University's Miller Theater. Les Délices presents its own concert series in Cleveland art galleries and at Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights, OH, where the group is Artist in Residence. Les Délices has been featured on WCPN, WCLV and WKSU in Ohio, WQXR in New York, and NPR's syndicated Harmonia and Sunday Baroque, and music from their debut CD appeared in the audio-guide for *Watteau, Music, and Theater*, a special exhibit at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The ensemble's third CD, "Age of Indulgence," will be released in 2017.



A musicologist trained at the University of Chicago, **Shawn Keener** brings a scholar's eye to the design process, combining a commitment to historical accuracy with the simple delight of seeing primary sources first-hand. Her work with Chicago's Newberry Consort for programs such as "Rosa das Rosas: Cantigas de

Santa Maria" (2012–15) and "Le Roman de Fauvel" (2016) has been praised by critics in Chicago, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee. After years working at the Newberry Library, Keener is now an editor at A-R Editions, the leading North American publisher of scholarly editions of music.



Acclaimed as a "lovely, tender high tenor" by *The New York Times*, **Owen McIntosh** enjoys a diverse career of chamber music and solo performance ranging from bluegrass to reggae, heavy metal to art song, and opera to oratorio.

A native of remote Northern California, Mr. McIntosh has shared the stage with the country's finest ensembles, including Apollo's Fire, Blue Heron, Boston Baroque, Carmel Bach Festival, Les Canards Chantants, New Vintage Baroque, Staunton Music Festival, TENET, Trident Ensemble, True Concord, San Diego Bach Collegium, and the Grammy-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street. Recent solo engagements include Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with Boston Baroque, Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* with the American Classical Orchestra, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* with Apollo's Fire and with Green Mountain Project, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with Grand Rapids Symphony, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* with Opera Omnia and Boston Baroque, and the Evangelist in Bach's *St. John Passion* with Tucson Chamber Artists.



Reviewers describe **Jason McStoots** as having an "alluring tenor voice" (*ArtsFuse*) and as "the consummate artist, wielding not just a sweet tone but also incredible technique and impeccable pronunciation" (*Cleveland*

Plain Dealer). In 2015 he won a Grammy in Opera with the Boston Early Music Festival for the music of Charpentier. A respected interpreter of early music whose solo appearances include *Les plaisirs de Versailles* (Charpentier), *Orfeo, Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, *Vespers of 1610* (Monteverdi), *Abduction from the Seraglio* (Mozart), *Christmas Oratorio*, *St. Mark Passion* (Bach), *Dido and Aeneas* (Purcell), and *Messiah* (Handel), he has appeared with Boston Lyric Opera, Emmanuel Music, Pacific MusicWorks, TENET, San Juan Symphony, Bach Ensemble, Casals Festival, Seattle Early Music Guild, Tragicomedia, and Tanglewood Music Center. He is a core member of Blue Heron and can be heard on all Blue Heron recordings. Other recording credits include Lully's *Pysché*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, and Charpentier's *Acteon* with BEMF (CPO), Fischer *Vespers* (Toccatina Classics), and *Awakenings* with Coro Allegro (Navona).

Scott Metcalfe has gained wide recognition as one of North America's leading specialists in music from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries and



beyond. Musical and artistic director of Blue Heron, he is also music director of New York City's Green Mountain Project (Jolle Greenleaf, artistic director) and has been guest director of TENET (New York), the

Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Emmanuel Music (Boston), the Tudor Choir and Seattle Baroque, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver, BC), Quire Cleveland, the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton, NJ), and Early Music America's Young Performers Festival Ensemble. Metcalfe also enjoys a career as a baroque violinist, playing with Les Délices (dir. Debra Nagy), Montreal Baroque (dir. Eric Milnes), and other ensembles, and directing the baroque orchestra at Oberlin Conservatory. He taught vocal ensemble repertoire and performance practice at Boston University from 2006-2015 and is at work on a new edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois.

Debra Nagy has been called a "musical polymath" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) for her accomplished performances as a singer and historical wind player. One of North America's leading performers on the baroque oboe, Debra is a principal player with American Bach Soloists, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, and Apollo's Fire, and is a regular guest with the Handel & Haydn Society and the Boston Early Music Festival, among other ensembles. A dedicated



chamber musician, Debra is the founder of Les Délices (whose debut recording was named “One of the Top Ten Early Music Discoveries of 2009”) and performs late medieval music as a regular guest with Blue Heron and the Newberry Consort. She has recorded over 30 CDs with repertoire ranging from 1300-1800 and has had live performances featured on CBC Radio Canada, Klara (Belgium), NPR’s Performance Today, WQXR (New York City) and WGBH Boston. Debra is an unabashed foodie who loves commuting by bike from her home in Cleveland’s historic Ohio City neighborhood.



Countertenor **Martin Near** enjoys a varied career exploring his twin passions for early music and new music. Mr. Near recently sang in the solo quartet of Arvo Pärt’s *Passio* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, was the countertenor soloist in the premiere performance of Dominick DiOrio’s *Stabat mater* with Juventas New Music Ensemble, sang the role of Hamor in Handel’s *Jephtha* with Boston Cecilia, and was noted for his “fine work” in *Buxtehude’s Heut triumphieret Gottes Sohn* with Boston Baroque. He

sings regularly with Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, and the Handel & Haydn Society. Mr. Near was Music Director of Exsultemus from 2009 to 2012.



Charles Weaver performs on early plucked-string instruments as a recitalist and as an accompanist. Chamber music appearances include Quicksilver, Early Music New York, Piffaro, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Folger

Consort, Blue Heron, Musica Pacifica, and the Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble. He is on the faculty of the Juilliard School, where he teaches “Historically Informed Performance on Plucked Instruments,” and last season was the assistant conductor for Juilliard Opera’s production of Cavalli’s *La Calisto*. He also works with the New York Continuo Collective, an ensemble of players and singers exploring seventeenth-century vocal music in semester-length workshop productions, and has taught at the Lute Society of America Summer Workshop in Vancouver, the Madison Early Music Festival, and the Western Wind Workshop in ensemble singing. Mr. Weaver is associate director of music at St Mary Church in Norwalk, Connecticut, where he specializes in Renaissance polyphony and Gregorian chant.

Acknowledgments

Blue Heron’s existence as a performing ensemble is made possible by the devotion, hard work, and financial support of a community of board members, staff, volunteers, donors, and concertgoers. We offer our grateful thanks to all those who join us in creating, nurturing, and sustaining an organization dedicated to making the music of the 15th and 16th centuries come alive in the 21st.

Blue Heron is extraordinarily fortunate to work with a slate of talented, skilled, and devoted designers, engineers, videographers, and photographers. Our programs, postcards, season brochure, advertisements, and CD booklets are designed by Melanie Germond and Pete Goldlust. Erik Bertrand maintains and rebuilt our website.

(The site was originally built by Evan Ingersoll, who also designed our programs for many years.) Our concerts are recorded by Philip Davis (Cape Ann Recordings) or Joel Gordon; Joel is also the engineer for our CDs, working with our producer Eric Milnes. Kathy Wittman (Ball Square Films) is our videographer and Liz Linder is our photographer. Our debt to these wonderful people who have shaped our look and sound is impossible to overstate.

We are very grateful to the gracious hosts who offer their hospitality to musicians from out of town.

Many thanks to our board and to all our volunteers for their help this evening and throughout the year.

We are honored and grateful to have so many generous donors.

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