

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday, October 8, 2020

1:15 pm

Streamed to YouTube, Facebook, and gemsny.org

Burning River Baroque

Malina Rauschenfels ~ soprano Paula Maust ~ harpsichord

A Mad, Burning Desire

I Burn, My Brain Consumes to Ashes	John Eccles (1668–1735)
From Rosy Bow'rs	Henry Purcell (1659–1695)
Let the Dreadful Engines	Henry Purcell
While I With Wounding Grief Did Look	Gottfried Finger (1660–1730)
Whilst I With Grief	Henry Purcell
Lysander I Pursue in Vain	John Blow (1649–1708)
Beneath a Poplar's Shadow	Henry Purcell
Haste, Give Me Wings	John Eccles
Bess of Bedlam	Henry Purcell

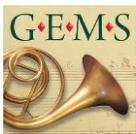
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About Burning River Baroque:

Praised by the *Boston Musical Intelligencer* as a group that “left an indelible imprint on my psyche,” Cleveland-based Burning River Baroque brings diverse communities together through vibrant musical performances that inspire engaging dialogues and meaningful social change. Inspired by the tremendous environmental reform that occurred after the Cuyahoga River burned, the ensemble strives to engage listeners of all ages and walks of life by offering most concerts for free or by donation and by performing in both traditional and non-traditional venues. From urban churches and coffeehouses to rural libraries and everywhere in between, they bring the drama and vitality of baroque music to life for contemporary audiences by demonstrating the profound connections between issues in the baroque era and those of modern times. Additionally, they commission a new composition each season to further fuse together ideas of the past and present in a way that feels fresh and relevant to contemporary audiences. Since its formation in 2012, Burning River Baroque has put on 15-20 concerts each season.

About the Artists:

Juilliard-educated **Malina Rauschenfels** is a vocalist, cellist and baroque violinist, as well as co-director of Burning River Baroque. Praised by the *Boston Musical Intelligencer* as “spellbinding” and for her “powerful clarion tones and crisp articulation,” she has also been commended by *Cleveland Classical*: “Her ability to turn notation on a page into fully realized human emotion was a feat of the imagination.” Equally comfortable with early music and contemporary music, she has been featured in recordings with The Newberry Consort, Duo Mignarda, Quire Cleveland, Marble Sanctuary Choir and Toby Twining Music. Additionally, she performs with El Fuego Early Music Ensemble, Crescendo, North Carolina Baroque Orchestra, and Trinity Chamber Singers, and recently won the Waterloo Region Contemporary Music Sessions’ Contemporary Performance Prize for performing two pieces for singing cellist. She has mentored emerging musicians and performed at WRCMS in Waterloo, Canada and Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatán in Mérida, Mexico. Malina loves to work in interdisciplinary contexts, incorporating gesture and theatricality into musical performance and working with creators in different art areas. Connecting all work to present day situations, and her life in particular, is of the utmost importance to make the performance come alive for the audience.

In Malina’s 12-year NYC incarnation, she participated in many adventures. Malina performed a work for cellist with two bows by Kurtag with Alarm Will Sound, debuted as a dancing violinist in an international dance festival with Jody Oberfelder Projects, and premiered her upside-down flute duet at the Bang on a Can Festival. While completing her Master’s in Cello Performance at Juilliard, Malina performed Davidovsky’s *Divertimento for Cello and Orchestra* with the Juilliard Orchestra under Reinbert de Leeuw and also played a solo recital in Carnegie’s Weill Hall. She majored in Composition and Cello at Eastman School of Music.

Currently Malina teaches violin, viola, cello, flute and piano in her home in Cleveland Heights, travels frequently for performances, and released her first solo CD: *In D – Solo Cello Through the Ages*. She also teaches aerial silks and intertwines her circus skills with her musical creations. malinarauschenfels.com

Praised for combining “great power with masterful subtlety” by *DC Metro Theater Arts*, harpsichordist and organist Dr. **Paula Maust** performs extensively as a soloist and chamber musician. As a co-director of both Burning River Baroque and Musica Spira, she curates edgy concert programming and lectures connecting baroque music to current social issues. Equally committed to scholarship and performance, her research focuses on the reception history of early modern women on stage and expanding the Western music theory canon. Her article “Notorious Strumpets on the Restoration Stage” can be read at *Early Music America Online*, and she recently submitted an article, “Turning the Madwoman Upside Down,” to *Women and Music*. Upcoming publications include a blog post for the Women’s Philharmonic Advocacy on the canoneses of Vienna and an open-source database of inclusive music theory examples.

Paula has been a faculty member at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County since 2016 where she teaches harpsichord, organ, music theory, keyboard skills, and music history courses. She also teaches theory and aural skills at the Johns Hopkins University and Peabody. As the recipient of the Dean’s DMA fellowship, Paula completed her doctorate in 2019. She earned Master of Music degrees in harpsichord and organ from Peabody and the Cleveland Institute of Music, respectively, and she completed her Bachelor of Music degree in church music/organ at Valparaiso University. Her teachers include Adam Pearl, Webb Wiggins, Todd Wilson, and Lorraine Brugh. More info can be found at www.paulamaust.com.

Program Notes:

“A Mad, Burning Desire” highlights the extraordinary accomplishments of the first English actresses who gained the legal right to take the public stage in the early 1660s. Many of these groundbreaking early modern women capitalized on the concurrent societal fascination with mental illness and catapulted themselves to fame by portraying characters who descended violently into lovesick madness on the Restoration stage. Precisely what the term “madness” meant at the time is difficult to define. Writers often used the words “madness,” “melancholy,” “lovesickness,” and “frenzy” somewhat interchangeably to describe a host of symptoms that ranged from “raving without a fever” to “fear and sadness, evil thoughts without any cause” and “sometimes laughing, singing, then sad, fearful, rash, doting, crying out, threatening, skipping, leaping, then serious, etc.” While the definitions of madness in the seventeenth century are not uniform, most early modern physician-scholars did agree that the cause of such psychological distress was imbalance in the four bodily humors. One of the inherent challenges of understanding the concept of madness at this time is a lack of primary source accounts from diverse perspectives. At the same time that mad characters were being paraded across the English stage to great critical acclaim, first-hand stories and experiences of the very real individuals who suffered from madness were reduced to silence and are consequently lost to history; the silencing of the “mad” — a theme that has regrettably been almost constant across history — was no less operative at this time.

Such silence no doubt rendered the very vocal fall of dramatic characters into madness all the more intriguing to audiences, not least because there was also a growing interest in studying madness and mental illness around this time. Across the course of the seventeenth century, English philosophers and medical experts alike began to think of madness and other psychological maladies as medical conditions rather than spiritual deficiencies. At the visual epicenter of Restoration-era London’s cultural fascination with madness was Bethlehem Royal Hospital (Bedlam), which was transformed from a dilapidated hospital into a sprawling mental institution with space for over 200 patients in 1676. The entrance gate of the new facility was flanked with vivid and foreboding stone carvings of “Melancholy Madness” and “Raving Madness” by Caius Gabriel Cibber. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, visitors could put a donation in the “poors’ box” to observe those society had deemed insane. The reasons for these visits varied, but the inmates of Bedlam provided an element of spectacle and entertainment for those who paid a penny or more to come watch them.

The practice of female characters singing madness on the English stage began with Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and the character of Ophelia. Ophelia famously succumbs to feminine erotic madness after being rejected by Hamlet. Clad in a loose white dress and “playing on a lute, and her hair down singing,” she talks in riddles and rhymes and sings several bawdy ballads about death and losing her virginity. This crucial moment in the theatrical canon stitched together madness, music and sexuality — in the form of the character’s exposed body and suggestively wild hair — into a complex that would endure for centuries. When women were finally granted the legal right to play female characters in 1662 it was both a significant step for women’s professional advancement and also fraught with political and sexual tension. The very presence of women on the public stage sparked numerous social, religious, and legal debates throughout western Europe in the seventeenth century. From those who decried the immorality of female performers to those who fetishized, courted, and even raped them, most Restoration-era Englishmen seemed to have strong opinions about the women on stage. The very act of appearing on stage subjected seventeenth-century women to having their personal lives enmeshed with their public personae, and the lines between an actresses’ character on stage and her own personality were often blurred in the perception of the public. Working as a professional singer and actress in the Restoration theater was not considered to be an acceptable profession for “respectable” Englishwomen. The actress as whore trope born out of earlier European traditions of female courtesans entertaining guests with music, drama, and sex was heightened by the presence of women on the Restoration stage.

It was within this complicated system of thought about gender roles and psychological conditions that the Restoration-era mad song rose to popularity. While opera was flourishing in France and the Italian regions in the late seventeenth century, the English remained primarily interested in spoken theatrical plays, many of which contained instrumental music and songs added throughout the drama. Frequently when a character would experience madness in a play, he or she would sing an elaborate mad song. Written for characters in both tragedies and comedies, mad songs featured extreme and rapid changes of mood, incoherent repeated text, abrupt modulations, and fantastical imagery. Male and female characters were liable to succumb to madness in different ways. Madmen either genuinely experience madness due to heartache or vengeful wrath at external circumstances and overcome it to triumph in power, or they briefly fake madness for their own gains. In contrast, the vast majority of female mad characters are shown as solitary in their plights, elicit pathetic pity from the audience, are weak in either character or restraint, and are almost always destroyed by their madness.

The opening set of mad songs on today’s program are from Thomas D’Urfey’s stage play *The Comical History of Don Quixote*, which was performed in three parts in 1694 and 1695. Each song created a sensation at its premiere and remained popular well into the eighteenth century. Anne Bracegirdle was by far the most famous singer-actress in London during her career. Her trademark characteristic was that she boldly claimed to remain a virgin, which was both an anomaly for a seventeenth-century actress and also seemed to heighten the public’s fascination with her. In 1692, Charles Lord Mohun was so

infatuated with Bracegirdle that he attempted to abduct and presumably rape her. He was unsuccessful and proceeded to go on a jealous rampage that ended with the murder of actor William Mountfort, who Mohun suspected of being romantically involved with Bracegirdle. This level of spectacle and titillation followed Bracegirdle throughout her career. Her performance of **“I Burn, My Brain Consumes to Ashes,”** which depicts the quintessential female descending into lovesick madness on the stage, garnered rave reviews. In fact it was so beloved that D’Urfey wrote a laudatory poem about her performance of the work in which he himself goes mad over the experience of watching Bracegirdle sing “I Burn.” This poem was then set by both Henry Purcell and Gottfried Finger in the mad songs that are the second set of songs on this program. **“From Rosy Bow’rs,”** the last song that Purcell wrote before his death, was performed by the young singer-actress Letitia Cross. While Bracegirdle’s performance resulted in its own type of public hysteria, Cross received a poor review and that part of the play was considered to be a flop. Perhaps her unpopularity was due to the fact that Cross’s character Altisidora does not actually experience lovesick madness. Rather she *pretends* to go mad in order to manipulate the male hero Don Quixote. **“Let the Dreadful Engines”** was sung by the male mad character Cardenio (played by John Bowman) who is both devastated and furious that his beloved Lucinda has left him to join a convent. In typical fashion, the song ends with a misogynistic rant in which he blames all women for his problems.

John Blow’s mad song **“Lysander, I Pursue in Vain”** is one of the few mad songs from the period that was not intended for a stage work, and it is Blow’s only known mad song. It was likely written for the soprano and lutenist Arabella Hunt whose virtues were celebrated by a number of early modern writers, including Blow himself who said “she reigns alone, is Queen of Musick by the People’s choice.” Unlike the other singers on today’s program who were thought of as low-class for their appearances on the public stage, Hunt enjoyed the patronage of Queen Mary II and was a respected member of London society. Her personal life was not without scandal, however, as she apparently unknowingly married a woman who was posing as a man. The marriage was annulled six months later, and rather than remarrying Hunt continued her career as a court musician.

“Beneath a Poplar’s Shadow” was part of a 1693 revival of Nathaniel Lee’s play *Sohponisba*. The priestess Cumanna enters the stage scratching her face, stabbing a dagger into her arms, and with spirits following her. As she sings her mad song, she endeavors to induce a trance on those around her. The intense contrasts between each section in the song convey an illogical and deranged state of mind. As a playwright Lee was uniquely positioned to depict mental illness on the stage because he spent five years in Bedlam recovering from a period in time when his mind allegedly became completely unhinged after his patrons neglected him. After being released from his confinement he lamented, “They called me mad, and I called them mad, and damn them, they outvoted me.”

Anne Bracegirdle also gave voice to the premier of **“Haste, Give Me Wings”** in Thomas Randolph’s *The Fickle Shepherdess*. Her character was the shepherd Amintas, and once again Bracegirdle was lavishly praised for her performance, especially because the trousers she wore for the role allowed audience members the chance to see the shape of her legs, a feature that was obscured when she portrayed female characters on stage. **“Bess of Bedlam”** was Henry Purcell’s first mad song, and while excerpts of it were intended for several plays, it was never performed in its entirety in a theatrical production. The text was inspired by earlier 17th-century ballad texts “Tom O’ Bedlam” and “Forth from My Sad and Darksome Cell.” The Bedlamite characters Tom and Maud (or Bess in this case) made frequent appearances in the popular culture of the broadside ballads that swept England in the 17th century and were likely the inspiration for numerous mad characters on the Restoration stage.

Bedlam was an institution shrouded in controversy for decades. In addition to conflicts over ownership and management, the seventeenth century and later centuries saw a number of patients wrongfully detained in Bedlam. These included attempts by husbands to control wives, and family members to embezzle fortunes from heirs, among other criminal acts that forced perfectly sane individuals into confinement for months or even years, thereby destroying their reputations and stripping them of legal rights. While these incidents were not the norm, they, along with the often brutal and inhumane treatment of the mentally ill for centuries, are part of Bedlam’s complex history. While mental health issues in contemporary society are fortunately no longer the source of entertainment that they were for early moderns, living with mental health issues today is often brutally stigmatized, frequently leaving those who are most vulnerable without adequate support and care. By looking back at this snapshot view of madness in seventeenth-century London, we can examine the ways in which cultural values have both remained stagnant and also shifted so that we can be more equipped to advocate for better mental health care treatment and awareness.

~Paula Maust, 2019

NEXT WEEK: Richard Kolb
The 10-course Lute

Song Texts

I burn, I burn, my Brain consumes to Ashes;

Each Eyeball too, like Lightning flashes:
Within my Breast, there glows a solid Fire,
Which in a Thousand Ages can't expire.
Blow, blow, the Wind's great Ruler;
Bring the Po and the Ganges hither,
'Tis sultry, sultry Weather;
Pour 'em all on my Soul,
It will hiss like a Coal,
But never be the cooler.
'Twas Pride, hot as Hell,
That first made me Rebel,

From Love's awful Throne, a curst Angel I fell:
And mourn now the Fate,
Which my self did create;
Fool, fool, that consider'd not when I was well.
Adieu, adieu, transporting Joys,
Off ye vain fantastic Toys,
That dress'd this Face and Body to allure;
Bring, bring me Daggers, Poison, Fire,
For Scorn is turn'd into Desire;
All Hell feels not the Rage which I, poor I,
endure.

From Rosy Bow'rs,

where Sleeps the God of Love,
Hither, ye little waiting Cupids, fly,
Teach me in soft melodious Songs to move,
With tender Passion, my Heart's darling Joy.
Ah! let the Soul of Music Tune my Voice,
To win dear *Strephon*, who my Soul enjoys.

Or, say ye Powers, my Peace to Crown,
Shall I Thaw my self or drown?
Amongst the foaming Billows increasing,

All with Tears I shed
on Beds of Ooze, and Chrystal Pillows,
lay down my lovesick Head.

Or if more influencing,
is to be brisk and Airy,
with a Step and a Bound,
and a Frisk from the Ground,
I will Trip like any Fairy.
As once an *Ida* Dancing
were three Celestial Bodies,
with an Air, and a Face,
and a Shape, and a Grace,
let me Charm, like Beauty's Goddess.

No, no, I'll straight run mad,
that soon my Heart will warm,
when once the Sense is fled,
Love has no Power to Charm:
Wild, thro' the Woods I'll fly,
Robes, Locks shall thus be tore;
A thousand deaths I'll dye,
E'er thus in vain adore.

Ah, 'tis in vain, 'tis all, 'tis all in Vain,
Death and Despair must end the Fatal pain;
cold, cold Despair, disguis'd like Snow and Rain,
falls on my Breast,
Bleak Winds in Tempests Blow,
my Veins all Shiver, and my Fingers Glow,

my Pulse beats a Dead March, for lost Repose,
and to a solid lump of Ice,
my poor fond Heart is froze.

Let the dreadful engines of eternal will,
The thunder roar and crooked lightning kill,
My rage is hot as theirs, as fatal too,
And dares as horrid execution do.
Or let the frozen North its rancour show,
Within my breast far greater tempests grow;
Despair's more cold than all the winds can blow.

Can nothing, nothing warm me?
Yes, yes, Lucinda's eyes.
There Etna, there,
There, there Vesuvio lies,
To furnish Hell with flames
That mounting reach the skies.

Ye powers, I did but use her name,
And see how all the meteors flame;
Blue lightning flashes round the court of Sol,
And now the globe more fiercely burns
Than once at Phaeton's fall.

Ah, where are now those flow'ry groves
Where Zephyr's fragrant winds did play?
Where guarded by a troop of Loves,
The fair Lucinda sleeping lay:

While I with wounding grief did look,
When love had turn'd your brain,
From you the dire disease I took,
And bore myself the pain.
Marcella, then, your lover prize,
And be not too severe;
Use well the conquests of your eyes,
For pride has lost your dear.

Whilst I with grief did on you look,
When love had turn'd your brain,
From you, I the contagion took,
And for you, for you bore the pain.
Marcella, then your lover prize,
And be not too severe,

Lysander I pursue in vain;
Cruel Lysander, thus to fly me;
Belinda never must obtain,
Who is so great, will still deny me.

But am I not the God of Love?

There sung the nightingale and lark,
Around us all was sweet and gay;
We ne'er grew sad till it grew dark,
Nor nothing feared but short'ning day.
I glow, I glow but 'tis with hate
Why must I burn for this ingrate?
Cool, cool it then and rail,
Since nothing, nothing will prevail.

When a woman love pretends,
'Tis but till she gains her ends,
And for better and for worse
Is for marrow of the purse,
Where she jilts you o'er and o'er,
Proves a slattern or a whore,
This hour will teaze and vex,
And will cuckold ye the next,
They were all contrived in spite,
To torment us, not delight;
But to scold and scratch and bite,
And not one of them proves right,
But all, all are witches by this light.
And so I fairly bid 'em, and the world, Good
Night.

Ambrosio treats your flames with scorn,
And racks your tender mind;
Withdraw your frowns, and smiles return,
And pay him in his kind.
Yet smile, again where smiles are due,
And my true love esteem:
For I much more do rage for you
Than you can burn for him.

Use well the conquest of your eyes,
For pride has cost you dear.
Ambrosio treats your flames with scorn,
And racks your tender mind,
Withdraw your smiles and frowns return,
And pay him in his kind.

Mad that I loved and not suppressed the flame;
See, see not it rises to the sky,
And turns a blazing star;
The frightened earth looks pale and cries:
It threatens universal war.

Bring my trusty arms:
Weak beauty must successful prove;
This dart has stronger charms.

Ah! Feeble arms and hurtless dart!
Nothing, nothing Belinda can prevail,
Alas, what hopes to wound a heart
Arm'd with a double coat of mail?

She that could noble conquests boast,
Now falls a victim to disdain and shame.
Belinda is forever lost;

Beneath a poplar's shadow lay me,
No raging fires will there dismay me;
Near some silver current lying;
Oh! Under sleepy poppies dying.

I swell and am bigger than Typhon e'er was,
With a strong band of brass, O bind me about,
Lest my bosom should burst for the secret to
pass,
And the fury get out.

Haste, give me wings and let me fly,
That I may mount the starry sky,
And there of all the gods enquire,
How I may quench my fierce desire.

See where the charming nymph does lie;
Oh! Give her to me, or I die.

I'll mount above and rescue my love,

Bess of Bedlam

From silent shades, and the Elysian groves,
Where sad departed spirits mourn their loves;
From crystal streams,
and from that country where
Jove crowns the fields with flowers all the year,
Poor senseless Bess,
Cloth'd in her rags and folly,
Is come to cure her lovesick melancholy.

Bright Cynthia kept her revels late,
While Mab, the Fairy Queen, did dance,
And Oberon did sit in state
When Mars at Venus ran his lance.

Two armies already join battle above:
The God of War fights the God of Love.
Stand firm, my batallions;
The tyrant shall yield;
My reserve of wing'd archers will carry the field:
They fly, smite, flank and rear.

So now will I storm your castle i'th' air,
The chariot of the sun in my rage overtuning;
Consume the whole world,
Since Belinda's aburning.

I cannot, I will not be vex'd any longer;
While I rage I grow weak,
And the goddess grows stronger.

And I'll tumble the tyrant down,
He shall not dare to court my fair,
Though graced with th'imperial crown.

See, see, see, see, see, see, see!
Neptune with his wat'ry train,
Come ye tritons all around,
Come plunge me in the briny main,
And all my flames confound.

Did you not see my love as he pass'd by you?
His two flaming eyes,
if he come nigh you,
They will scorch up your hearts!

Ladies, beware ye,
Lest he should dart a glance that may ensnare ye.
Hark! Hark! I hear old Charon bawl,
His boat he will no longer stay;
The Furies lash their whips and call,
'Come, come away, come, come away.'

Poor Bess will return to the place whence she
came,

In yonder cowslip lies my dear,
Entom'd in liquid gems of dew;
Each day I'll water it with a tear,
Its fading blossom to renew.

For since my love is dead,
and all my joys are gone,
Poor Bess for his sake
A garland will make,
My music shall be a groan.

I'll lay me down and die
With in some hollow tree,
The rav'n and cat,
The owl and bat,
Shall warble forth my elegy.

Since the world is so mad she can hope for no
cure;
For love's grown a bubble, a shadow, a name,
Which fools do admire and wise men endure.

Cold and hungry am I grown,
Ambrosia will I feed upon,
Drink nectar still and sing.

Who is content
Does all sorrow prevent,
And Bess in her straw,
Whilst free from the law,
In her thoughts is as great as a King.