“Stunning and supercharged music… performed with visceral passion.”
– clevelandclassical.com

Burning River Baroque brings diverse communities together through vibrant musical performances that inspire engaging dialogues and meaningful social change.

FOR BOOKING CONTACT
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Destructive Desires:

Jacquet de la Guerre’s Susanne
(youtube.com/watch?v=K1zSF5SwZK4)

- Soprano, harpsichord

The profound worldwide impact of the #MeToo campaign has opened what we hope to be a continued dialogue about the abuse of power and the meaning of consent in all types of relationships.

While abuse happens in countless forms between all combinations of genders, we cannot ignore the fact that, in far too many instances, women are victimized by men. Recognizing that many of us were raised without awareness of consent issues, we look beyond contemporary narratives and focus on stories old enough to be in our collective unconscious — including the Bible, Greek mythology, and the implied power of Cupid. We explore the human tendency toward entitlement, contemplating what it means to individual and collective humanity. Stories and myths have, for millennia, anchored the cultural acceptance of sexual violence. Common plotlines render us immune to crossed lines of consent. With thoughtful commentary between pieces, we help audience members acknowledge the ludicrous nature of these timeless stories—juxtaposed with their lyrical beauty and integrated with present-day social issues.

A Mad, Burning Desire

Purcell’s From Rosy Bow’rs
(youtube.com/watch?v=40lACBp7QFU)

- Soprano, harpsichord

The first English actresses to legally take the stage capitalized on early modern society’s fascination with mental illness and catapulted themselves to fame by portraying characters who descended violently into lovesick madness.

The right to appear on stage was a gigantic leap for women’s rights that was fraught with immense political and sexual tension. From those that decried the immorality of women performing in public to those who fetishized, courted, and even raped them, nearly everyone in Restoration-era London had an opinion about the women who were putting themselves on stage. Concurrently, London’s Bethlem Royal Hospital (Bedlam) was transformed into a sprawling mental institution flanked by statues of “Raving Madness” and “Melancholy Madness.” The tradition of wealthy individuals paying to observe Bedlam’s residents began in 1610, and by the end of the century, visitors regularly came to Bedlam to be entertained by those society deemed insane. Early modern society’s obsession with madness converged with spectacular mad scenes in the Restoration theater, and mad songs by Henry Purcell and John Eccles captivated London’s theatre-going audience in the 1690s.

At a Crossroad: Will you Live, Love or Die?

Grandval’s La Matrônë d’Éphèse
(youtube.com/watch?v=w8KB5dQV-A)

- Soprano/violin, harpsichord

Pinel’s Le Printemps Cantatille
(youtube.com/watch?v=3zu671dpHu4)

- Soprano/violin, harpsichord

Join Burning River Baroque for a diverse concert full of epic plot twists and compelling questions about how we interact with others in relationships.

This intriguing program of French cantatas and harpsichord solos explores the stories of complex characters who make complicated choices that result in life, love, and death. As audience members experience the tales of Semelé, Zephyr and Flora, and the Widow of Ephesus, they are encouraged to consider which adventure they would choose for themselves if living-out these stories. This captivating hour of exquisite music by Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, Julie Pinel, and Nicolas Racot de Grandval raises compelling questions about how we engage with one another in relationships — challenging beliefs and providing an excellent dose of humor, for good measure.

Press

“[Burning River Baroque] gives each work, regardless of fame, its particular brand of beguiling inventiveness and compelling passion...A group that offers exciting and varied early music with a sense of high drama and appeal... Though on a small scale, the impact of these musical dramas is explosive, delivered as they were here with high energy, skill, and conviction.”

— Nicholas Jones, Cleveland Classical

“Maust is an unflappable harpsichordist who plays with vibrancy, elegance, and studied restraint...Rauschenfels’ ability to express three emotions during one held note was staggering. Her ability to turn notation on a page into fully realized human emotion was a feat of the imagination.”

— David Kulma, Cleveland Classical

“Do not miss Rauschenfels’ searing emotional portrayals. [Her] multidimensional communication — remarkable singing, but also physically engaged acting — brought out every nuance of this sensitive musical language. ... Burning River Baroque left an indelible imprint on my psyche.”

— Liane Curtis, Boston Musical Intelligencer

“Music and art of [the baroque] period was meant to be inordinately decorative and hyper-expressive, pushing against the cool, rational conventions of the Renaissance. To be reminded of those values, all you need to do is to check out a performance by the enterprising — and surprising — Burning River Baroque.”

— Daniel Hathaway, Cleveland Classical
The Artists

Praised as “a refined and elegant performer by the Boston Musical Intelligencer, Paula Maust performs extensively across the United States as a harpsichordist and organist. She is a co-director of Burning River Baroque, a founding member of Musica Spira, and she has recently collaborated with Temple of Music, the Washington Bach Consort, and the Handel Choir of Baltimore. Paula teaches courses in music theory, keyboard skills, music history, organ, and harpsichord at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She conducted a program of baroque opera scenes with the UMBC collegium and opera workshop. She also teaches music theory at the Johns Hopkins University and coaches students at the Peabody Institute. Paula is the recipient of the Dean’s DMA Fellowship at Peabody, where she is currently completing doctoral studies in harpsichord. She earned MM degrees in harpsichord and organ from Peabody and the Cleveland Institute of Music, respectively. She completed her BM in organ at Valparaiso University. (WEB: paulamaust.com)

Malina Rauschenfels is vocalist, baroque cellist and violinst, as well as co-director of Burning River Baroque. She has been praised for her “exceptional vocal range, strong acting abilities, gripping theatricality, and commanding gestures, both musical and physical.” Equally comfortable with early music and contemporary music, she has recorded CDs with The Newberry Consort, Duo Mignarda, Quire Cleveland, Marble Sanctuary Choir, and her own solo cello CD, “In D,” which can be found online. She has performed extensively with Toby Twining Music, El Fuego Fire, and for composer premiers. She went to Eastman and Juilliard as a cellist and composer, focusing on new and old music. (WEB: malinarauschenfels.com)

Contact/Booking

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