

Savannah Baroque presents Into the Light

The Family Business: Venice, Italy: Francesca Caccini

- Fresche Aurette.....Francesca Caccini (1587-after 1641)
- Aria of the Shepherd from *La liberazione di Ruggiero*, 1625.....F. Caccini
- Maria, Dolce Maria.....F. Caccini

Creativity in the Convent: Novara, Italy: Isabella Leonarda

- Sonata Prima.....Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)
Allegro, Largo, Adagio, Aria Allegro, Adagio, Vivace
- Salve Regina.....I. Leonarda

The Family Business: Brandenburg Bayreuth: Anna Bon

- Keyboard Sonata #2..... Anna Bon (1730? -after 1769)
Allegro non molto, Andante, Allegro
- Trio in d minor, op. 3 #3.....A. Bon
Andantino, Allegro, Presto.....A. Bon
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English Parlors and Concert Rooms

- In Vain Cloris You Design.....Lady Mary Harvey Dering (1629-1704)
- Sonata for violin and harpsichord.....Mary Young Barthélemon (1749-1799)
Allegro, Minuetto
- Sonata for the Pianoforte or the Harpsichord #2.....Maria Hester Park (1760-1813)

The Royal Court: The Princess

- Sonata in a minor per flauto traversoWilhelmine von Bayreuth (1709-1758)
Affettuoso, Presto, Allegro
- Two CavatinasWilhelmine von Bayreuth
Adagio, Recit., Adagio, Allegro, Adagio, Allegro

Into The Light: Program Notes

Background

Difficult as it has long been for a woman to become a composer, it is even more frustrating that successful women composers, well-known and praised in their own times, have long had their works relegated to forgotten dusty corners. Not only were many of these talented women forgotten, or dismissed and relegated to the sidelines, but some of their compositions were wrongfully attributed to their spouses, brothers, or other (male) composers in whose collections their work appeared.

To be a successful woman musician up until as recently as the mid 20th century, meant certain things had to come into alignment. One route was to be born into a family of professional musicians. Another route was to be from a prominent and/or wealthy family that also believed in educating the young women in the family, and supported their endeavors not only financially, but by their actions. Even then, it could become difficult after marriage. A variant on coming from a prominent family was to enter a convent. Convents were places where many brilliant women could literally cloister themselves away from the demands of family, husbands, and child rearing, and instead dedicate themselves to knowledge and the arts.

The Composers and their works

Francesca Caccini (1587 – after 1641), an Italian composer from the early Baroque, lutenist, singer, poet, and music teacher to the elite, was the daughter of another famous composer and singer, Giulio Caccini. He trained both his daughters, who both became employed by the Medici court. Francesca served the Medici as teacher, chamber singer, rehearsal coach, and composer of chamber and stage music until early 1627. She was the court's highest paid musician by 1614. Her only surviving opera, *La Liberazione di Ruggiero*, is the oldest known opera by a woman composer. She published a collection of thirty-six solo songs and soprano/bass duets in 1618 (*Il primo libro delle musiche*).

We offer three of Francesca Caccini's compositions that show her mastery of diverse styles. Kyle and Tina will perform *Fresche aurette*, a lovely duet for soprano and bass that celebrates springtime, followed by Tina singing an Aria from Caccini's opera, and finally a beautiful sacred work celebrating Mary, the mother of Jesus. In appropriate period interpretation, we have adapted our instrumentation to the original score with only figured bass line and vocal parts.

Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704) was born into a noble family of Novara, Italy, and joined the Convent of the Order of Ursula at the age of 16. She remained there until the end of her long and prolific life, publishing over 200 works in 20 collections, the last collection published when she was 80 years old. Most of her compositions come from her later life as she had substantial administrative and spiritual duties, especially after becoming Mother Superior. Her intellect and varied abilities were highly regarded far outside the convent. Her published compositions were widely known and show tremendous musical knowledge and experimentation. In 1724, the

Parisian theorist and music collector Sébastien de Brossard wrote: “All the works by the famous and incomparable Isabella Leonarda are so beautiful, so charming, so brilliant and at the same time so knowing and wise, that I regret not possessing all of them.”

We will be performing several works by Leonarda including an instrumental trio sonata and a gorgeous vocal tribute to Mary, *Salve Regina* to be sung by Kyle. Leonarda was unusual in writing several works for bass singers.

Anna Bon (1739? 1740?- >1769) was born and raised in the family business. Her parents were employed by various royal courts. Her mother, Rosa Ruvinetti Bon, was a professional singer in comic operas, and her father Girolamo Bon, was a “versatile man of the theater”, working as a scene painter and designer, impresario, and writer and composer of opera and cantatas. Her parent’s work took them to the Russian court, on to Dresden under Elector Friedrich August III, and then to Frederick the Great in Potsdam. As a young girl, Anna likely at least heard Hasse, CPE Bach, Graun, and Quantz. By 1755, the family settled at the court of Margrave Friedrich and his wife Wilhelmine, sister of Frederick the Great, about whom you can read below. In her first two published works, Anna (then 15) lists herself as being in the service of “His Most Serene Highness Friedrich, reigning Margrave of Brandenburg Culmbach”. She composed keyboard solos and sonatas for one or two flutes.

Our program includes a delightful keyboard sonata, and a sonata by Savannah Baroque’s two flutists, Jeana Melilli and Erika Skye Andres.

Mary Harvey, who became Lady Mary Dering (1629 –1704) was an English composer whose father was a wealthy London merchant. She married Sir Edward Dering, a member of Parliament. Both men supported Mary’s talents as a musician, composer and poet. Indeed, her husband shared her interests in poems and music, and wrote the words to the song *In Vain Fair Cloris, You Design*, that we will perform today. Despite having seventeen children (ten surviving to adulthood), she continued to write, compose, and sing. She studied with the famous composer Henry Lawes who dedicated his *Second Book of Airs* to her: “I have consider’d, but could not find it lay in my power to offer this Book to any but to your Ladiship. Not only in regard of that honour and esteem you have for Musick, but because those Songs which fill this Book have receiv’d much lustre by your excellent performance of them; and (which I confesse I rejoice to speak of) some which I esteem the best of these Ayres, were of your own Composition, after your Noble Husband was pleased to give the Words. For (although your Ladiship resolv’d to keep it private) I beg leave to declare, for my own honour, that you are not only excellent for the time you spent in the practise of what I set, but are your self so good a Composer, that few of any sex have arriv’d to such perfection.” Sadly, the only works of hers which survive are the three songs published in Lawes *Second Book of Airs*.

Mary Young Barthélemon, also known as Polly Young, Mary Young, Polly Barthélemon and Maria Barthélemon) (1749 –1799), an English soprano, composer, and keyboard player was born into the family business of well-known professional singers, composers and organists of the 17th and 18th centuries. She studied singing with her aunt Cecilia,

wife of the famous composer Thomas Arne and one of the greatest English sopranos of the 18th century. Mary first performed professionally at the age of 12, in the role of Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in Dublin, Ireland. The following year, she debuted in London at the Covent Garden Theater where she sang and played harpsichord between acts. Her husband François-Hippolyte Barthélemon was a composer and violinist, and their daughter, Cecilia Maria Barthélemon, was also a composer and opera singer. Following her marriage, Young mostly appeared in performances with her husband and later their children in England and Europe. She then also began to compose and publish music, including a set of six sonatas for harpsichord or piano and violin, published in 1776.

Ann Cafferty and Anne Acker will be playing one of her 6 Sonatas for Keyboard and Violin, Op.1 (1776), a charming work well suited to the time when at social gatherings, women or girls played the keyboard, while their young amateur male companions would play the violin.

Maria Hester Park (born Reynolds) (1760-1813) was a British keyboard player, composer, and singer. Nothing is yet known about her early life or training. Her first public appearance was at the age of 22 as Maria Hester Reynolds in the Hanover Square concert series (established by Johann Christian Bach and Carl Friedrick Abel) with a concerto on harpsichord. She played in at least three other public events, on piano and harpsichord, but after her marriage to Thomas Park, an antiquarian, engraver, and man of letters, as was typical, she ended her performance career. She became quite well known as a teacher and composer, teaching music to various members of the aristocracy. Her surviving compositions include solo keyboard sonatas, some with optional violin accompaniment, short vocal works (aka glees), a keyboard concerto with strings, a waltz, and a divertimento for piano and violin. Additional works including for harp and piano and piano duet have been lost.

The Sonata II in Eb for Fortepiano or Harpsichord was dedicated to the Duchess of Devonshire, one of her pupils.

Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, born Princess Friederike Sophie Wilhelmine of Prussia (1709-1758) had the good fortune, literally, to have training growing up, and then to help foster one of the major intellectual centers of the Holy Roman Empire, including with high musical and artistic culture. She was the older sister of Frederick the Great, the eldest daughter of Frederick William I of Prussia and the granddaughter of George I of England. She married Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg-Bayreuth. She is responsible for the continued great beauty of the architecture and parks in the town of Bayreuth, Germany. She was a gifted composer and supporter of music (including being Anna Bon and her family's patron).

We will cap off our program with two of her works, a flute sonata performed by Jeana Melilli, and a glorious Cavatina set, sung by Tina, accompanied by our full instrumentation.