



## The Musicke Companye with Melanie Gutteridge

St Paul's Church, Canterbury

21 October 2022, 7.30 pm

### APHRA BEHN (1640-1689)

Born in Harbledown, on the edge of Canterbury, in 1640, Aphra Behn (née Johnson) lived in and around the city until her mid-teens, when she moved with her family to London. Having worked as a spy for Charles II in 1666 during the Anglo-Dutch war, she launched her career as a playwright in 1670 with a highly successful tragicomedy, *The Forced Marriage*, and at least 18 plays by her were staged in London before her early death 1689. She was also a prominent poet, translator, and fiction-writer, and is best-known today for her novella about a slave uprising in Suriname, *Oroonoko*. In the face of that glittering career – and her burial in Westminster Abbey – it is astonishing that she is not widely known and celebrated. *The Aphra Behn Society*, established in 2021, is determined to get her the recognition she deserves. New members are welcomed! See our Facebook page.

### THE MUSICKE COMPANYE

Philippa Hyde –soprano

Ciara Hendrick - mezzo-soprano

Daisy Vatalaro - baroque 'cello

Helen Rogers - harpsichord

This award-winning early music group is renowned for its innovative programming and compelling, lively performances. They have released three CDs: *Oh! Ravishing Delight* (Forties Recording label of English and Italian baroque music); *Handel and Companye*, featuring music from Handel's London (Swedish label Intim Musik); and *O Bone Jesu*, featuring early sacred Italian music and instrumental works.

**MELANIE GUTTERIDGE** is known for playing Emma Keene in *The Bill*, as well as for a plethora of television drama and comedy. On stage, Melanie has worked with

Alan Ayckbourn in the company that took the highly acclaimed *Private Fears in Public Places* to the 'Brits off Broadway' festival in New York. She also starred in the number one tour of Agatha Christie's *Spider's Web*, playing Clarissa, and most recently played Beverly in *Abigail's Party* for Doug Rintoul at the Queen's Theatre Hornchurch and Derby Playhouse – a bucket-list role and an incredible experience. Melanie is delighted to highlight Aphra Behn's myriad achievements. It has long been important to her to bring women like Aphra out of obscurity and place them where they belong: at front and centre of the fields they contributed to so richly.

### TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME

1. Henry Purcell (1659–95), 'Sound the trumpet', from Ode, *Come ye Sons of Art away*)
2. Behn, To the fair Clarinda, who made Love to me, imagined more than Woman
3. John Blow (1649–1708), duet, 'Ah, Heav'n, what is't I hear?'
4. Henry Purcell, duet, 'Oh the sweet Delights of Love', from *Dioclesian*
5. Behn, 'Love Armed', from her play, *Abdelazer*
6. music from Henry Purcell's *Abdelazer Suite* for 'cello and harpsichord, and the song from that suite, 'Lucinda is bewitching Fair'
7. Behn, from *Oroonoko*: Caesar/Oroonoko calls his fellow enslaved men to rebel
8. Henry Purcell, 'We the Spirits of the Air', from John Dryden, *The Indian Queen*
9. Behn, The Willing Mistress'
10. Thomas Arne (1710–1778), song, 'When Daisies Pied', from *Love's Labour Lost*
11. Thomas Arne, aria, 'Gentle swain,' from William Congreve, *The Judgement of Paris*
12. Giovanni Bononcini (1670–1747), duet, 'Luci Barbare spietate'

### INTERVAL

13. Henry Purcell, 'Two Daughters of this Aged Stream', and 'Shepherd, shepherd, leave decoying', from John Dryden, *King Arthur*
14. Behn, Aminta's speech in *The Forced Marriage*
15. John Playford (1623–1686), music for 'cello and harpsichord, 'Dancing Master'
16. Behn, Lady Galliard's speech from *The City-Heiress*
17. Henry Purcell, 'One Charming Night', from Elkanah Settle (?), *The Fairy Queen*
18. Henry Purcell, song, 'Sweeter than Roses'
19. George Frederic Handel (1685–1759), air and variations from 'The Harmonious Blacksmith', suite no. 5
20. Behn, Epitaph on the Tombstone of a Child, the Last of Seven that Died before

21. George Frederic Handel, 'What Passion cannot Music raise and Quell!', from John Dryden, *A Song for St Cecilia's Day*
22. Behn, 'On her Loving Two Equally'
23. George Frederic Handel, 'Fronda leggiara e mobile'

**Tonight's programme features** music written for the stage in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London. The towering giant of English 17th century music was, of course, the prodigious Henry Purcell, with his unique talent for setting vocal music. Purcell lived at a time, however, when opera had not yet reached the London stage, so the vast majority of his 100 + songs were composed as incidental music for the plays of the time where, alongside instrumental works, they were interwoven with the dramatic action.

This evening's programme includes music from some of the most famous theatre works of the day, such as John Dryden's *King Arthur* and an anonymous adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (possibly by Elkanah Settle) renamed *The Fairy Queen*. Also included are extracts from the instrumental suite written for Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer; or, The Moor's Revenge*, and its song, 'Lucinda is bewitching Fair'. The *Abdelazer* instrumental suite that you will hear later found fame when Benjamin Britten reworked it as the opening of his *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*.

John Blow both preceded Henry Purcell as Organist and Master of the Choristers of Westminster Abbey, and succeeded him after Henry Purcell's untimely death in 1695. Blow wrote only one stage work but published a large collection of vocal works.

From the eighteenth century, we have included pieces by three of the best-known composers of their time. Opera had arrived in London and the stage was dominated by works from the two great rivals, George Frederic Handel and the Italian Giovanni Bononcini. Italian opera was all the rage in London, and this was the heyday of famed Italian castrati. An amusing rhyme survives from the time written by the poet John Byrom:

Some say, compar'd to Bononcini  
That Mynheer Handel's but a Ninny  
Others aver, that he to Handel  
Is scarcely fit to hold a Candle  
Strange all this Difference should be  
'Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee!

In the middle of the programme is Thomas Arne. Best known now as the composer of 'Rule Britannia', his two songs performed tonight were written in the mid-1740s for plays at The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. 'When Daisies Pied' is an amusing number: listen for the play on the word cuckoo!

**APHRA BEHN TODAY** Anyone, anywhere in the world, studying for a degree in English today reads Aphra Behn's works – especially her slave-uprising novella *Oroonoko*, and her wonderful comedy *The Rover*. *The Rover* also attracted fantastic reviews when Loveday Ingram directed it at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 2016. Behn's central importance as a canonical author is also marked by the appearance of her complete works from the pre-eminent academic publisher, Cambridge University Press. The Aphra Behn Society is determined to make this great daughter of Canterbury a household name, and to alert the general public to the striking relevance today of the topics she explored and the characters she created.

**JOIN OUR ENDEAVOUR TO GET APHRA BEHN CELEBRATED AS AN IMPORTANT DAUGHTER OF CANTERBURY.** Please follow and like us on Facebook – The Aphra Behn Society – and on Twitter @AphraBehnSoc. Or just chat to any of the committee members at tonight's event about joining the Society.

The Aphra Behn Society has a second event at the Canterbury Festival: **Sexspionage: A History of Female Espionage from Aphra Behn to Mata Hari and Anna Chapman**, by the renowned expert **Nigel West**, on Tuesday, 25 October 2022, 8 p.m., in Canterbury Cathedral Lodge. Do join us!